

## **“Higher state minimum wage tied to lower suicide rates”**

Published by Reuters on April 20, 2019

Researchers compared minimum wages between US states and found:

“Every **\$1.00 increase** in a state’s minimum wage was associated with a **1.9 percent decrease** in its annual suicide rate, the researchers calculated.”

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-suicide-wages/higher-state-minimum-wage-tied-to-lower-suicide-rates-idUSKCN1RV17R> (emphasis mine)

## **Australian Psychological Society recommends a consultation cost **\$251****

“The 2018-2019 Recommended Schedule of Fees has set the standard 45 to 60 minute consultation fee at \$251. This is a recommendation only.”

<https://www.psychology.org.au/for-the-public/about-psychology/what-it-costs>

**The Medicare rebate for a general psychologist is **\$84.40** per session and **\$124.50** for a clinical psychologist.**

<http://www.redcouchpsychologycounsellingtherapyclinicmelbourne.com.au/consultationcostshealthinsuranceandmedicarererebates.shtml>

**This means that a patient will have to pay out-of-pocket up to \$166.60 per consultation.**

For someone on the weekly minimum wage of \$719.20 (gross) their net pay will be circa **\$634**.

**The out-of-pocket cost of seeing a psychologist represents one quarter of their net weekly income.**

**Reducing suicides **also benefits the economy** by reducing lost productivity**

"In addition to the tragedy and human suffering, suicides are also highly costly to the economy: One study estimates the average cost of a suicide at \$1.3 million, primarily due to lost productivity," the paper reads.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/raising-the-minimum-wage-could-prevent-suicides-study-says-2019-4/> Please note that this quote relates to the US economy and is in USD. In Australia, the Productivity Commission is currently researching “[The Social and Economic Benefits of Improving Mental Health](#)” and will report later this year: <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health/issues/mental-health-issues.pdf>

Thank you for considering the above in your Review. Sincerely, Walter Lee



HEALTH NEWS   APRIL 20, 2019 / 5:38 AM / A MONTH AGO

# Higher state minimum wage tied to lower suicide rates

Lisa Rapaport

4 MIN READ



(Reuters Health) - Suicide rates grow more slowly in states that increase their minimum wage, according to a U.S. study that suggests this might be one strategy for curbing deaths by suicide.

Although a small proportion of the population works for minimum wage, people living in low-income households have a higher risk of suicide than more affluent people, researchers note in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Raising the minimum wage has been linked to a number of positive outcomes for low-income Americans including higher odds of graduating high school and lower odds of having unmet medical needs.

For the current study, researchers examined data on suicide rates and minimum wages in all 50 U.S. states from 2006 to 2016. Over this period, there were approximately 432,000 deaths by suicide.

The minimum wage averaged \$8.00 an hour during the study, although it changed at some point over the decade in all 50 states.

Every \$1.00 increase in a state's minimum wage was associated with a 1.9 percent decrease in its annual suicide rate, the researchers calculated.

"Our study found that when a state increased its minimum wage, the suicide rate increased less than in other states and other times," said lead study author Alex Gertner of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

“It’s possible that increasing the minimum wage improves life satisfaction, increases access to healthcare and decreases mental illness, which all lead to fewer suicide deaths,” Gertner said by email. “We can’t say for sure that the slower growth in suicide rates is caused by increasing minimum wages, but it warrants further study.”

During the study, 16 states had a minimum wage equal to the federal minimum wage every year. In these states, the average minimum wage increased from \$6.42 in 2006 to \$8.28 in 2009 and then decreased to \$7.40 in 2016.

Among the other 34 states, minimum wages were higher than the federal minimum wage for about seven years, on average, during the decade-long study period.

While suicide rates rose during the study period, their increase was stunted after minimum wage increases.

The effect of higher minimum wages on suicide rates appeared most consistent in the years since 2011, as the U.S. economy rebounded from a period of financial crisis.

An annual decrease of 1.9 percent in the suicide rate during the study period would have resulted in roughly 8,000 fewer deaths, researchers estimated.

While it’s possible that increasing prosperity in a state could be what enables it to raise the minimum wage and could explain lower suicide rates, the researchers adjusted their analysis to account for state economic conditions, including employment rates and productivity.

Although the study cannot prove whether or how changes in the minimum wage might directly impact suicide rates, it builds on evidence from other studies suggesting that higher wages might indeed mean fewer suicide deaths, said Dr. Martin McKee, a researcher at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who wasn’t involved in the work.

Previous studies have tied minimum wage increases in the UK to improved mental

health in the population, and earlier research has also linked economic crisis to psychological turmoil, McKee noted.

“This is an important study as it is the first to find that states with higher minimum wages have experienced slower growth in suicides, McKee said by email. “This study reminds us that political decisions can make the difference between life and death.”

SOURCE: [bit.ly/2IDx9j4](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2019.03.004) American Journal of Preventive Medicine, online March 21, 2019.

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