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One in 10 **bereaved** by **suicide risk** contagion  
  
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One-tenth of people who lose friends or relatives to **suicide** are at **risk** of following suit.

British researchers have found that **bereaved** people are 65 per cent more likely to attempt **suicide** if they are grieving for comrades who took their own lives.

The finding suggests that -losing someone to **suicide** should be considered a **risk** factor for early death, alongside such measures as familial history of heart -attack or cancer. And while relatives of **suicide** victims have long been considered a high-**risk** group for **suicide**, the new study suggest screening should be extended to their in-laws and friends.

Lead researcher Alexandra -Pitman of University College London- said doctors and thera-pists should include such probes in clinical assessments of patients with psychological distress or -suicidal thoughts.

The study, published in the journal BMJ Open, tracked more than 3400 university staff and -students who had suddenly lost friends or family members, through both natural and unnatur-al causes.

The 614 participants who had lost people to **suicide**- proved substantially more likely to contemplate killing themselves afterwards, with 9 per cent attempting to do so.

Dr Pitman said it was not clear why **suicide** had such devastating effects on friends and relatives, particularly given that it did not appear to trigger higher rates of depression than other forms of -bereavement.

She said it was possible that **suicides** inspired people to copy them - a phenomenon known as "**suicide** contagion" - but this was impossible to verify without gauging people's attitudes before and after comrades had killed themselves. The researchers say taboos around **suicide** could make it particularly destructive. If you are depressed or contemplating **suicide**, help is available at Lifeline on 131 114

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