



# Suicide prevention in Flemish pharmacies (Belgium)

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In collaboration with  
**VLESP** | Vlaams Expertisecentrum Suïcidepreventie

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## INTRODUCTION

In Flanders, the Flemish Pharmacists Network (VAN), in collaboration with the Flemish Centre of Expertise in Suicide Prevention (VLESP), worked on suicide prevention by promoting expertise in public pharmacies with the support of the Flemish government.

→ **This project is part of the third Flemish action plan in suicide prevention, aiming to reduce suicides in Flanders by 10% by 2030 compared to 2022.**

## INSIGHTS & GOALS

Scientific research and experience have already uncovered much about the origins and processes of suicide, along with effective prevention strategies. Reducing access to means of suicide is an effective prevention method, and pharmacists can play a crucial role as gatekeepers, being low-threshold and easily accessible gatekeepers to healthcare for many citizens.

### Phase 1:

- literature review
- needs assessment
- creation, launch and evaluation of an e-learning

### Phase 2:

- mentoring of pharmacists to engage in productive conversations
- collecting data

→ **The goal is for pharmacists to actively question their patients about possible suicidal ideation and, if necessary, refer them to a health professional for further help. Suicidality was present in almost 1 in 3 conversations (32.9%), with a substantial number involving vulnerable patients (isolated elderly, persons in poverty, persons with a migration background, ...)**

## CONCLUSION

The e-learning program received positive evaluations for promoting expertise in pharmacies. During the second phase of the project, pharmacies effectively reached a significant number of patients and took concrete actions, such as referrals. Pharmacists undeniably add value and play a role in suicide prevention.

## RESULTS PHASE 2



**15 active pharmacies**  
Results from 5 of the 6 months  
137 registered conversations



**64.96% of the conversations lasted 5 to 15 minutes**  
29.93% lasted 15 to 30 minutes



**21,9%** More than 1 in 5 patients have a history of a suicide attempt.



**32,9%** Almost 1/3 conversations were with vulnerable patients.

### Suicidality was present in almost 1/3 conversations



### 6 crisis situations



### Concrete actions taken



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