Study finds risk of suicide higher for female nurses

Female nurses have a higher risk of suicide compared with some other occupations, according to a new analysis.

The Office for National Statistics looked at the occupations of 18,998 people aged 20 to 64 who took their own life in England between 2011 and 2015.

It found that the risk of suicide among female nurses was 23% higher than the national average, with the risk of suicide among female healthcare professionals 24% higher. For male healthcare professionals, the risk of suicide was 16% lower than the average.

Professions with a higher risk of suicide for women included roles in culture, media and sport (69% above the national average), and primary school teachers (42% above the average).

Public Health England (PHE), the Samaritans and charity Business in the Community have produced toolkits for employers, including mental health training and suicide awareness for managers.

PHE chief executive Duncan Selbie said: ‘I urge all employers, large or small, public or private sector, to treat mental health as seriously as physical health.’

If you or anyone you know has been affected by suicide, call the Samaritans on 116 123.

See the toolkits at tinyurl.com/toolkit-suicide

In brief

A district nurse shortage is leaving patients in pain and putting pressure on NHS staff, according to a report by think tank the King’s Fund. It found that people at the end of life are being left for hours without pain relief, and that funding for district nursing services is either static or being cut, despite rising demand. Go to rcni.com/kings-fund-district

The government must exempt healthcare staff from a new immigration charge or risk worsening staff shortages, the RCN has said. The college and the British Medical Association have called for the NHS and social care system to be exempt from the immigration skills charge, which comes into effect on 6 April and will see employers pay £1,000 for each year of an overseas employee’s tier 2 visa.

Sight loss charity the Thomas Pocklington Trust has called for more training for care home staff in vision awareness and early interventions. Go to tinyurl.com/Pocklington-care-homes

The National Garden Scheme is sponsoring a bursary fund for nurses and other registered healthcare professionals at Marie Curie to improve care for people with a terminal illness. Nurses can undertake post-registration qualifications or specialist university modules in palliative and end of life care, with help from the fund. Go to tinyurl.com/NGS-bursary