

*The New York Times*

*Dr. Fredric Brandt, 65, Celebrity  
'Baron of Botox,' Is Dead*

By GUY TREBAY APRIL 6, 2015



Dear Friend,

Once again depression is in the headlines with the shocking and sad news about the suicide of famous skin-care pioneer Dr. Fredric Brandt.

I am particularly stunned because I knew Dr. Brandt personally. He was a genuinely kind and caring person with great creativity and talent. I did not know he struggled with depression.

I just saw Dr. Brandt last week and detected nothing different about his demeanor -- no clue or tip that he was suicidal. Even with the knowledge that I've gained as HDRF Chair, I am at a loss to understand how a doctor at the top of his field could see patients and friends on one day, and end his life a few days later.

What I do know indelibly from eight years of work with depression is that it can be a killer. Statistics show that in **the U.S., a person dies by suicide every 13.3 minutes, claiming more than 39,500 lives each year.** Untreated depression accounts for about 60% of suicides.

According to HDRF Board member Dr. Steven Roose of Columbia University, the 65-year-old Brandt reflects key demographic variables most at risk:

- Suicide rates are highest in men over 60
- Men account for 80% of suicides in the US
- 70% of suicides in the US are white males

Bottom line, events like this make us ask: What can I do to help someone in trouble? If you are concerned, immediate action is very important. Suicide can be prevented and experts say that most people who feel suicidal demonstrate warning signs. Recognizing some of these warning signs is the first step in helping someone you care about.

**According to the Centers for Disease Control, here are some of the signs you might notice in a friend or associate that may be reason for concern:**

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings.

Still, familiarity with the warning signs falls woefully short of addressing the public health issue of suicide. It's worrisome to know that 20% of victims have seen their physician on the day of suicide; 40% have seen a physician within a week; and 70% have seen a physician within a month.

"It is true that often there are warning signs that tragically go unnoticed," said HDRF Board member Dr. Harold Koenigsberg of Mount Sinai Hospital. "But sometimes it is done impulsively without any clear signs."

What is clear is the need for more research. **The critical switch that triggers suicidal ideation into action represents a vast gap in our knowledge about depression and suicide.** I hope that our groundbreaking research will yield answers that can prevent the senseless loss of life and talent that Dr. Brandt's suicide represents.

Thank for your your ongoing support of HDRF's advanced research.

Sincerely yours,



Audrey Gruss  
Founder & Chair