

Better Data, Better Analysis

Carlisle Moody

College of William and Mary

CDC (2003)

First Reports Evaluating the Effectiveness of Strategies for Preventing Violence: Firearms Laws
Findings from the Task Force on Community Preventive Services

- In conclusion, the application of imperfect methods to imperfect data has commonly resulted in inconsistent and otherwise insufficient evidence with which to determine the effectiveness of firearms laws in modifying violent outcomes.

Research Priority 1

- Better gun prevalence data
- Researchers are reduced to using proxies for gun prevalence

Some proxies for gun prevalence

1. Guns and Ammo readers
2. Gun suicides divided by total suicides
3. Gun homicides divided by total homicides
4. $(2+3)/2$
5. Fatal gun accident rate
6. Gun share of stolen property
7. NRA membership
8. Hunting licenses
9. Weapons arrests
10. Gun dealers

National Research Council *Firearms and Violence (2005)*

- The existing data on gun ownership, so necessary in the committee's view to answering policy questions about firearms and violence, are limited to a few questions in the General Social Survey. (p. 3)

NRC (2005) continued

- “The committee recommends a research effort to determine whether or not these kinds of data can be accurately collected with minimal risk to legitimate privacy concerns.”
(P. 4)

Recommendation

- Expand existing surveys or begin a new annual national firearms survey with adequate coverage while protecting the privacy of respondents

Research Priority 2

- Better defensive gun use data

Defensive gun use

- Guns generate costs and benefits
- There are somewhere between 65, 000 and 2.5 million DGU's per year

NRC (2005) again

- “Accurate measurement on the extent of defensive gun use is the first step for beginning [a] serious dialogue on the efficacy of defensive gun use at [in?] preventing injury and crime.” (P. 7)

Recommendation

- New annual national survey on defensive gun use with adequate coverage and privacy protection for respondents

Research Priority 3

- Assess the efficacy of existing assault weapons bans and state laws requiring background checks on private purchasers

Recommendation

- A new study on assault weapons bans and background checks for private purchases

Research Priorities

1. Better measures of gun prevalence
2. Better measures of defensive gun use
3. Study of existing assault weapons bans and background checks for private purchases

States with background checks on private purchases

- CA 1991 H,R
- CO 2013 H,R
- CT 1995 H
- HI <1970 H
- IL 1968 H
- IN 1998 H
- IA 1990 H
- MD 1996 H
- MA <1970 H
- MI 1927 H
- MO 1981 H
- NE 1991 H
- NJ 1927 H
- NY 1934 H
- NC 1995 H
- PA 1995 H
- RI 1959 H
- TN 1959-1998 H

Assault weapons bans

- CA 1991
- CT 1993, 2013
- HI 1992
- MD 1994, 2013(pending)
- MA 1998
- NJ 1990
- NY 2013
- US 1994-2004