

Research Priorities for Public Health Efforts to Reduce Gun Violence

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Current Areas of CDC Research and Programs on Violence

- Child maltreatment
- Dating violence / intimate partner violence
- Sexual assault
- Elder abuse
- Suicide
- Youth violence – Academic Centers of Excellence
- National Violent Death Reporting System
- Foci: primary prevention, development, community.

Current Connection of CDC's Research to Preventing Homicides

- Replications of Ceasefire community public health program to reduce gun violence in Baltimore and Chicago.
 - Reductions in gun violence in most but not all intervention sites (Webster et al., 2013; Skogan et al. 2009).
 - Conflict mediations and implementation key.
- National Violent Death Reporting System.
- Glaring gap on the role of guns.

Gun Policy Research – Keeping Guns from High-Risk People

- Studies show consistent negative relationships between gun seller accountability measures and diversion of guns to criminals (Webster et al., 2001, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2013a; 2013b; Pierce & Braga, 2013).
- How readily do offenders access alternatives for new guns - out of state traffickers, internet, theft, older street guns?
- How do regulations affect price and difficulty of getting guns to high- and low-risk groups?

Gun Control Effects on Violence

- Groups prohibited from gun possession commit less violence – misdemeanants (Wintemute et al., 2001), SMI (Swanson et al., 2013), DVRO respondents (Zeoli & Webster, 2010; Vigdor & Mercy, 2006).
- Junk gun ban reduced gun homicides 8-11% (Webster et al., 2002).
- CAP laws reduce teen suicides 8% (Webster et al., 2004)
- Right-to-carry laws no or small harmful effects (Aneja, Donohue, & Zahng, 2011)

Weaknesses in Gun Policy Evaluations

- Statistical models based on questionable assumptions (timing - immediate constant effect; independence of 1 policy's effect on another's; no unmeasured confounders)
- Don't always examine subgroup effects (e.g., non-gang/drug)
- Policies examined (e.g., Brady, Federal AWB) and ignored (e.g., breadth of prohibitions).

“Pulling Levers” Focused Deterrence

Braga & Weisburd, 2012

- Increase risks faced by key offenders – heightened surveillance and federal penalties.
- Communicate risks directly to targets.
- CJ complimented by informal social controls
- Offer services and assistance to get jobs.
- 7 of 8 studies found strategy reduced violence.

Research to Further Public Health's Contributions to GVP

- Develop and test programs to complement law enforcement efforts to keep guns from high-risk people and deter violence.
 - Outreach/education of potential straw purchasers
 - New models of violence interruption and conflict mediation based on citizen involvement and rapid response by professionals that are less expensive than Ceasefire.
 - Model after community mobilization to prevent irresponsible alcohol sales practices and alcohol abuse. Address problem outlets, train sales staff, increased enforcement, public awareness (Holder et al., 2000).

Top Research Priorities

1. In-depth studies of how offenders obtain guns used to commit violence (internet, social networks) and backgrounds of buyers.
2. Multi-layered evaluations of gun sales regulations to assess effects on availability and use of guns by high-risk groups.
3. Development and testing of new community interventions to reduce availability and use of guns by high-risk groups (youth, abusers).