Firearm Violence: Where We Stand, What We Can Do

Orange County Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics
February 16, 2023
Garen Wintemute, MD, MPH
Disclosure

• Neither I nor any member of my immediate family has a financial relationship or interest (currently or within the past 24 months) with any proprietary entity producing health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients related to the content of this CME activity.

• I do not intend to discuss an unapproved/investigative use of a commercial product/device.
How to Tell a Mother Her Child Is Dead

By Naomi Rosenberg
Sept. 3, 2016
Pandemic-era developments

- In 2021, both at highest rates since early 1990s: ~47,300 deaths
- In 2020, firearms leading COD for children, adolescents (ages 0-19)*
Trends in NICS checks, Jan ‘14 – Jan ‘23

Monthly Background Checks per 1e+05 Population

Year


Observed
Expected
Death rates from firearm homicide, males, 2020:

- White
- Black
- Hispanic
Death rates from firearm suicide, males, 2020
Death rates from firearm violence, males, 2020

Deaths/100,000 population


White
Black
Hispanic
Deaths from firearm violence, males, 2020

Number of Deaths


White  Black  Hispanic

VPRP
Firearm death rates by year of age and intent, 2020

- Suicide
- Homicide
- Unintentional
Ownership and storage, US households with children

- 2015: ownership, 33%
  - 21% of these, firearm(s) loaded and unlocked
- 2021: ownership, 40%
  - 29% of these, firearm(s) loaded and unlocked

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing.

- After Edmund Burke
The BulletPoints Project

Clinical tools for preventing firearm injury
What you can do 1:1 with patients

- Make the commitment
- Study up
- Raise the issue when appropriate
- Be tailored, flexible, respectful
- Concrete goals
  - Prevent acquisition
  - Improve storage
  - Reduce access at times of crisis
You can ask; here’s when

- Intent to harm; imminent risk
- Individual risk factors
  - Present or prior violence
  - Alcohol abuse
  - Serious mental illness not meeting 5150 criteria
  - Cognitive impairment
  - The spouse? Parent? G-parent?
- Demographics
Public support for docs asking

- 68% (52% of owners) “at least sometimes” appropriate
- 90% (≥85% of owners) appropriate when any risk
- 84% (70% of owners) when kids in home
- 85-90% (owners, too) support intervention when risk imminent

Here’s how

• Be selective: risk factors first
• Access, storage, acquisition
• 5 L’s: Locked? Loaded? Little children?
  Feeling Low? Learned owner?
• Be nonjudgmental, non-prescriptive
• Be honest about evidence and gaps
You can disclose

• HIPAA: Disclosure permitted when “necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public and...is to a person or persons reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat”

• Extreme risk protection orders
Benefits

• Improved storage
  • Including an RCT of SBIRT
• Decreased access to high-risk persons in household
• Decreased weapon carrying among adolescents
• More work needed!
Barriers

• Lack of familiarity with firearms
• Lack of familiarity with risks and benefits
• No time
• Concern for effectiveness
• Concern for reaction
• Personal belief (‘no problem’; ‘docs shouldn’t do this’)

VPRP
What else you can do

- HVIPs
- Community violence prevention
- Access to society’s basic goods
- Improved firearm policies
- Commit for the long haul
- Be the change you want to see
Laws and their effects

**May decrease outcomes**
- Mental illness prohibitions
- Background checks
- Domestic violence prohibitions
- Surrender by prohibited possessors
- Child-access prevention laws
- Waiting periods
- Minimum age requirements
- Licensing, permitting requirements
- AW, hi-cap mag bans

**May increase outcomes**
- AW, hi-cap mag bans
- Permissive CCW laws
- Stand-your-ground laws

**Outcomes**
- Price of banned firearms
- Violent crime
- Unintentional injury and death
- Suicide
- Mass shooting

https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy.html
Trends in firearm mortality, 1981-2020

Deaths per 100,000 Population


49 States
California
Who stops a bad guy with a gun?

Thank you

gjwintemute@ucdavis.edu
https://ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/vprp

https://www.bulletpointsproject.org/