

Incidence of non-fatal pediatric firearm injuries in the US higher than previously estimated

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From 1999 to 2007, there were 185,950 emergency department (ED) visits in the U.S. for firearm injuries in children aged 0 to 19 years. A new abstract presented Monday, Oct. 17, at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference and Exhibition in Boston, provided an overview of these injuries, including a variety of risk factors including age, race, hospital location, and insurance type.

Researchers analyzed data from the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey of U.S. [emergency department](#) and [ambulatory care](#) visits and found that approximately 20,600 firearm injuries occur each year in children aged 0 to 19 years. Of these injuries, 4.5 percent, or 8,368 were fatal. Sixty- three percent of these injuries were intentional; 37 percent, or more than a third of these injuries, were unintentional.

Male children, adolescents aged 11 and older, and those of black race, were at higher risk for an ED visit secondary to a firearm injury.

Overall, the rate of non-fatal pediatric firearm injuries was 30 percent higher than previously reported according to lead study author Saranya Srinivasan, MD.

"This is a significant finding," said Srinivasan. "Perhaps we are underestimating the true scope of this problem."

In addition, "We know there are certain pediatric populations at higher risk for firearm injuries. We hope this research will bring attention to the issue of pediatric firearm injuries, and that we can continue to focus our efforts on firearm [injury prevention](#) campaigns, including targeting the regions and groups at the greatest risk for these injuries."

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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