

Number of scientific publications on firearms shows modest increase in recent years

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"In January 1996, Congress passed an appropriations bill amendment prohibiting the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from using 'funds made available for injury prevention ... to advocate or promote gun control.' This provision was triggered by evidence linking gun ownership to health harms, created uncertainty among CDC officials and researchers about what could be studied, and led to significant declines in funding," write Joseph A. Ladapo, M.D., Ph.D., of the New York University School of Medicine, New York, and colleagues in *JAMA*.

As reported in a Research Letter, the authors evaluated the change in the number of publications on firearms in youth compared with research on other leading causes of death before and after the Congressional action, focusing on children and adolescents because they disproportionately experience [gun violence](#) and injury. The 10 leading causes of death among children and adolescents ages 1 to 17 years were identified using CDC data on mortality between 1991 and 2010. Each cause was then matched to a Medical Subject Heading, and PubMed was searched from 1991-2010 using causes of death and child or adolescent to determine the annual number of publications.

"We only found modest increases in the number of scientific publications on firearms between 1991 and 2010, in contrast to other leading causes of death in youth. The change in number of publications

on firearms was lower than anticipated compared with publications not on firearms. There was not a discrete point identified at which the pattern of publications changed. Therefore, whether the Congressional action or other events were responsible is unclear," the authors write.

"The effect on publications after President Obama's January 2013 memorandum directing the CDC to conduct or support research on the causes of gun violence and approaches to prevent it should be evaluated."

More information: *JAMA*. 2013;310[5]:532-534

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