

Prevalence of household gun ownership linked to child gun shot wounds

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There are approximately 7,500 child hospitalizations and 500 in-hospital deaths each year due to injuries sustained from guns. In an abstract presented Oct. 27 at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference and Exhibition in Orlando, researchers also identified a link between the percentage of homes with guns and the prevalence of child gunshot injuries.

In "United States Gunshot Violence—Disturbing Trends," researchers reviewed statistics from the Kids' Inpatient Database (KID) from 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009 (for a total of 36 million pediatric hospital admissions), and estimated state household gun ownership using the most recent Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data (2004).

The study found that approximately 7,500 children are admitted to the hospital for the treatment of injuries sustained from guns each year, and more than 500 children die during [hospital admission](#) from these injuries. Between 1997 and 2009, hospitalizations from [gunshot wounds](#) increased from 4,270 to 7,730, and in-hospital deaths from 317 to 503.

The study also found a significant association between the percentage of gunshot wounds occurring in the home and the percentage of households containing any firearms, loaded firearms and unlocked loaded firearms.

"Handguns account for the majority of childhood gunshot wounds and this number appears to be increasing over the last decade," said lead study author Arin L. Madenci, MD, MPH. "Furthermore, states with

higher percentages of household firearm ownership also tended to have higher proportions of childhood gunshot wounds, especially those occurring in the home."

Many current gun control efforts focus on limiting the availability of military-style semi-automatic assault rifles.

"Policies designed to reduce the number of household firearms, especially handguns, may more effectively reduce the number of gunshot injuries in children," said Dr. Madenci.

More information: "United States Childhood Gun Violence—Disturbing Trends," aap.confex.com/aap/2013/webpro...ress/Paper22761.html

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