

Study finds 16 US children hospitalized for firearms injuries each day

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New research being highlighted at the 2017 Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting in San Francisco reveals that firearms injuries caused more than 5,800 U.S. youth to be hospitalized in 2012, or roughly 16 children each day.

The study abstract, "Pediatric Hospitalizations due to Firearm Injuries in the U.S. in 2012," will be presented on Sunday, May 8, at the Moscone West Convention Center. For the study, researchers examined the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project Kids' Inpatient Database (KID), which tracks hospital inpatient stays for children.

Beyond providing grim statistics on the sheer number of children injured by guns, the study also showed demographic and socioeconomic patterns tied to the injuries:

- While the majority of injuries in children under age 15 were unintentional, most among 15- to 19-year-olds were the result of assault.
- Nearly 90 percent of the gunshot patients were male, and, disproportionately, over half of the patients admitted with [firearm injuries](#) were Black.
- More than half of the children hospitalized for [gunshot injuries](#) (53 percent) lived in a zip code that fell within the bottom 25 percent of median household income. Roughly the same amount had Medicaid.

- The average length of hospitalization was 6 days, costing an average of \$22,644 per stay. The total estimated national cost of the hospitalizations was \$130 million.

"Our findings add urgency to the need for preventive public health measures to reduce gun injuries in children," said lead author Alyssa H. Silver, MD, FAAP, attending physician and assistant professor of Pediatrics, Division of Pediatric Hospital Medicine, Children's Hospital at Montefiore/Albert Einstein College of Medicine. "The fact that 57% of firearm-related injuries in children under 15 years old were unintentional, for example, highlights the need for improved gun safety and storage practices."

Dr. Silver also called for increased research funding for additional studies on pediatric firearms injuries, alongside other major threats to [children's](#) health. During the 2016-17 fiscal year, she noted, just \$2.2 million in federal funding was provided through the National Institutes of Health for firearms related research, compared with \$444 million for research on the Zika virus and \$286 million for cystic fibrosis studies, for example.

Dr. Silver will present the abstract, "Pediatric Hospitalizations due to Firearm Injuries in the U.S. in 2012," from 4:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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