

Youth violence in U.S. declines—but the war's not over

February 8 2018



(HealthDay)—Far fewer young people are turning up in U.S. emergency

rooms with assault injuries, but youth violence remains a serious issue, a new government study shows.

The good news: The number of nonfatal assault patients aged 10 to 24 dropped 28 percent between 2011 and 2015, reaching the lowest level in the 15 years studied, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported.

Still, almost 486,000 youths were treated in ERs for assault-related injuries in 2015. Most were males in their early 20s, the researchers found.

More than 81 percent had been intentionally struck. Stabbing, cutting and piercing accounted for more than 8 percent of the injuries. Guns led nearly 6 percent to seek treatment.

The cost of all this bloodshed: \$3.4 billion, including lost work.

"Youth violence remains a major public health problem," said psychiatrist Dr. Victor Fornari, who wasn't involved in the research.

"The underpinnings of this violence include [mental health problems](#), substance abuse and histories of childhood adversity," said Fornari. He's director of child and adolescent psychiatry at Zucker Hillside Hospital in Glen Oaks, N.Y.

The CDC researchers noted that certain policies and programs can reduce the risk for [youth](#) violence. They include school-based programs that build communication and problem-solving skills.

Also, working with parents or caregivers to set age-appropriate rules and monitor youth activities can help stem conduct problems and violence, the researchers said.

"Violence among young persons is preventable," wrote researchers led by Corinne David-Ferdon, of the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

For the study, David-Ferdon and her colleagues examined data from a nationally representative sample of emergency rooms between 2001 and 2015. They focused on nondeadly assault injuries, excluding sexual assault, among patients aged 10 to 24.

Overall, they found a significant decline in assault injuries during those years.

Still, about 9.6 million young people received emergency room treatment for assault injuries over the 15-year period. About 10 percent were hospitalized.

These numbers may be unrealistically low, the researchers noted, because many other victims may have sought treatment in different types of medical centers or not needed medical care.

The findings were published Feb. 9 in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, a CDC publication.

Fornari agreed with the researchers that prevention strategies are critical to stopping [youth violence](#) before it starts. Despite recent progress, innovative programs must be developed, he said, "in order to continue this promising trend."

Jessy Warner-Cohen, a health psychologist in New York, echoed that sentiment. And she stressed that a variety of approaches are necessary.

"We know that one size does not fit all in terms of helping our youth," said Warner-Cohen, of Long Island Jewish Medical Center in New Hyde

Park, N.Y.

There is a realization "that interventions have to be community-based and tailored to the community's specific needs; there is an increase in street-outreach teams, faith-based interventions, and connecting children to after-school activities," she said.

Moreover, [physical violence](#) shouldn't be the only target, she added.

Bullying is commonplace, Warner-Cohen said. She cited a 2015 CDC report that found more than 15 percent of youth had been electronically bullied and over 20 percent had been bullied on school property.

"While physical [violence](#) may be on the decline, aggression of a different sort is widespread," Warner-Cohen said.

More information: Victor Fornari, M.D., director, child and adolescent psychiatry, Zucker Hillside Hospital, Glen Oaks, N.Y.; Jessy Warner-Cohen, Ph.D., M.P.H., Long Island Jewish Medical Center, New Hyde Park, N.Y.; Feb. 9, 2018, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry talks about [violent behavior in young people](#).

Copyright © 2018 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Youth violence in U.S. declines—but the war's not over (2018, February 8) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-02-youth-violence-declinesbut-war.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.