

# Six countries in the Americas account for half of all firearm deaths

August 28 2018

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A new study reveals more than a quarter-million people died from firearm-related injuries in 2016, with half of those deaths occurring in only six countries in the Americas: Brazil, the United States, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Guatemala.

A part of the Global Burden of Disease, the study assesses firearm-

related mortality between 1990 and 2016 for 195 countries and territories by age and by sex. It is the most extensive study ever conducted on global firearm-related deaths. Deaths from conflict and terrorism, executions, and law enforcement shootings were not included in the total estimates.

"This study confirms what many have been claiming for years—that gun violence is one of the greatest public health crises of our time," said Dr. Mohsen Naghavi, a professor of global health at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington, and first author of the study. "There are no simple antidotes to address this health problem. The tragedy of each firearm-related death will continue until reasonable and reasoned leaders come together to address the issue."

The study, "Global mortality from firearms, 1990-2016," was published today in *JAMA*.

Study authors found patterns of firearm-related deaths vary widely by country and by cause. In 2016, 64% of global firearm-related deaths were homicides; 27% were suicides, and 9% were accidental injuries. Firearm-related homicides were the largest fraction of all firearm deaths in 113 of 195 countries and territories in 2016, whereas firearm-related suicides were the largest fraction of all firearm deaths in 67 nations.

Global firearm-related deaths exceeded global conflict and terrorism deaths every year from 1990 to 2016, except 1994, when the Rwandan genocide occurred.

"Our findings provide a comprehensive analysis of firearm-related deaths—by homicide, suicide, and accidental injury," said Dr. Ali Mokdad, Professor of Health Metrics Sciences at IHME and a senior author on the paper. "The study also reinforces the message that it is

imperative to expand gun safety and education."

Authors also revealed that in 2016, 87% of global firearm-related deaths—totaling 218,900—were of males, with more than 34,700 male deaths occurring in the 20-24 year age group alone.

"These findings show the disproportionately high mortality among men," said IHME Director Dr. Christopher Murray, also a senior author. "This study is important for policymakers at the national and global levels."

Additional key findings include:

- In 2016, with 39.2 deaths per 100,000 people (age-adjusted), El Salvador saw the highest cumulative firearm-related death rate globally; Singapore, with 0.1 deaths per 100,000, had the lowest death rate.
- The six countries in the Americas accounting for half of all firearm-related deaths in 2016 are Brazil (43,200 deaths), United States (37,200), Mexico (15,400), Colombia (13,300), Venezuela (12,800), and Guatemala (5,090).
- Aggregate firearm injury death rates decreased in most countries between 1990 and 2016; however, 41 countries—nearly half in Latin America and the Caribbean—saw constant rates or substantial rate increases.
- While the absolute number of firearm deaths globally increased from 209,000 deaths in 1990 to 251,000 deaths in 2016, the firearm [death](#) rate decreased slightly over the same time period.
- Across the 26-year span of the study, the firearm homicide rate stagnated, with no significant decrease recorded between 1990 and 2016.
- After Greenland (territory) with 22.0 deaths per 100,000 in 2016, the United States had the second-highest age-adjusted rate of suicide by firearm (6.4 deaths per 100,000) in the world.

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## **FIREARM-RELATED DEATHS (ALL AGES), BOTH SEXES, 2016**

**Aggregate firearm-related deaths (homicides, suicides, and accidental injuries combined)**

Brazil: 43,200 deaths

United States: 37,200

India: 26,500

Mexico: 15,400

Colombia: 13,300

Venezuela: 12,800

Philippines: 8,020

Guatemala: 5,090

Russia: 4,380

Afghanistan: 4,050

## **FIREARM-RELATED DEATH RATES (AGE- ADJUSTED), BOTH SEXES, 2016**

**Aggregate firearm-related deaths (homicides, suicides, and accidental injuries combined)**

### **Highest rates**

El Salvador: 39.2 deaths per 100,000 people

Venezuela: 38.7

Guatemala: 32.3

Greenland (territory): 25.9

Colombia: 25.9

Honduras: 22.5

US Virgin Islands (territory): 21.3

Brazil: 19.4

Jamaica: 18.1

Puerto Rico (territory): 17.1

## **Lowest rates**

Singapore: 0.1 deaths per 100,000 people

China: 0.2

Oman: 0.2

Japan: 0.2

Taiwan (Province of China): 0.3

Romania: 0.3

United Kingdom: 0.3

Qatar: 0.4

Maldives: 0.4

Mauritius: 0.4

## **Homicide by firearm**

### **Highest rates**

El Salvador: 38.9 deaths per 100,000 people

Venezuela: 32.9

Guatemala: 28.0

Colombia: 24.3

Honduras: 21.6

US Virgin Islands (territory): 19.0

Brazil: 18.2

Jamaica: 16.0

Puerto Rico (territory): 15.5

The Bahamas: 13.1

## **Lowest rates**

Singapore: 0.03 deaths per 100,000 people

Japan: 0.03

South Korea: 0.05

China: 0.05

Oman: 0.06

United Kingdom: 0.07

Iceland: 0.07

Romania: 0.08

Germany: 0.10

Indonesia: 0.10

## **Suicide by firearm**

### **Highest rates**

Greenland (territory): 22.0 deaths per 100,000 people

United States: 6.4

Uruguay: 4.2

Zimbabwe: 3.1

Venezuela: 3.0

Argentina: 2.7

Switzerland: 2.5

Montenegro: 2.5

Finland: 2.4

Serbia: 2.4

### **Lowest rates**

Singapore: 0.07 deaths per 100,000 people

Romania: 0.08

Lebanon: 0.08  
China: 0.08  
Japan: 0.09  
Bermuda (territory): 0.09  
Taiwan (Province of China): 0.10  
Grenada: 0.12  
Qatar: 0.12  
Fiji: 0.13

## **Accidental death by firearm**

### **Highest rates**

Guatemala: 3.6 deaths per 100,000 people  
Iraq: 3.1  
Antigua and Barbuda: 3.0  
Belize: 2.9  
Venezuela: 2.8  
Afghanistan: 2.4  
Uruguay: 2.4  
Chad: 2.3  
Guinea-Bissau: 2.2  
Haiti: 2.2

### **Lowest rates**

Oman: 0.3 deaths per 100,000 people  
Kuwait: 0.05  
Turkmenistan: 0.05  
Denmark: 0.05  
Mauritius: 0.05  
Singapore: 0.05

Indonesia: 0.05

Norway: 0.05

Iceland: 0.05

United Kingdom: 0.05

**More information:** The complete study and additional information are available at [www.healthdata.org](http://www.healthdata.org)

Provided by Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation

Citation: Six countries in the Americas account for half of all firearm deaths (2018, August 28)  
retrieved 5 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-countries-americas-account-firearm-deaths.html>

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