

# New AAP research examines US pediatric residents' experience treating gun injuries

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A new American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) study examines U.S. pediatric residents' experience during training in caring for children injured by guns, and their attitudes toward counseling families and public policies to address gun injury. Findings from the study will be presented during the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) 2019 Meeting, taking place on April 24—May 1 in Baltimore.

"Recent, tragic increases in deaths of children, teens and [young adults](#) from suicide, urban violence and [mass shootings](#) have generated renewed concern among pediatricians regarding firearm violence," said Lynn Olson, Ph.D., one of the authors of the study. "What we found in this study, is that clinicians' experience treating gun injuries begins very early in their training."

The study found that by completion of residency, seven of 10 pediatricians have direct experience with gun injuries. While personal background and geographic region shape attitudes on best approaches to reduce gun violence, large majorities believe pediatricians have a role in counseling families and support policies aimed at reducing gun injury for children.

The results indicated 69% of residents report caring for gun injuries during training (median injuries=3). In their own background, 30% grew up in a home with a gun. In attitudes toward counseling, 90% agree (strongly agree or somewhat agree combined) pediatricians should ask about the presence of guns in the home, 96% agree pediatricians should

ask parents to unload/lock guns; and 44% agree pediatricians should ask parents to remove guns from the home. In attitudes toward [public policy](#), high portions agree with policies such as universal background checks (95%) or banning [assault weapons](#) (90%), while few, (14%), support allowing teachers to carry guns in K-12.

Data was drawn from the 2018 AAP Annual Survey of Graduating Residents, a random sample across all U.S. programs (response=49%; analytic sample=480). Respondents were asked if they cared for children injured by guns during training. Using a 5-point scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree), respondents also expressed their attitudes toward counseling by pediatricians (three items) and public policies that may reduce firearm injuries (six items). Chi-Square examined variations in attitudes by: experience treating gun injury, gender, region of residency training, and whether guns in their home growing up.

No [attitude](#) variations were found by whether the resident had treated gun [injury](#). Few variations were found by gender. Support of public policies varied most by region of the country where trained and firearms in home growing up. For example, 98% in the Northeast, 93% in the West, 88% in the Midwest versus 80% in the South support banning assault weapons (p

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