

Research shows the impact of homicides in Latin America

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Homicide rates are dramatically reducing the life expectancy of Latin Americans, a new study from The Australian National University (ANU) shows.

Latin America accounts for around a third of the world's homicides despite having just eight percent of its population.

The study shows Honduran males are hardest hit, losing six years of life [expectancy](#) due to homicides when compared to developed countries. Honduran females lose two years.

According to the researchers, the life expectancy gap is in great part explained by the excess of [homicide](#) mortality.

For males in El Salvador this is equivalent to four years, while males in Colombia, Venezuela, Guatemala, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic all lose around two years.

Females from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala and Jamaica, all lose around half a year of life expectancy due to homicides.

Lead author, Associate Professor Vladimir Canudas-Romo of the ANU School of Demography, analysed causes-of-death across 23 Latin American countries in comparison to 15 European countries.

"These are very worrying numbers," Associate Professor Canudas-Romo said.

"We found major disparities in life expectancies in Latin American countries, particularly for men.

"Despite Latin American countries having seen progress in most other major causes of death, such as reductions in cancer and [cardiovascular disease](#), homicide is still affecting people's lives so much that there is little progress in life expectancies, particularly among young men.

"Usually suicide rates are higher than homicides in every part of the world, but in Latin America homicides are much higher."

The study also tracked changes in life expectancy between 1990 and

2014.

"There are some countries that have shown a lot of increase in life expectancy over this time. This includes Nicaragua and Peru, where declines in homicide mortality have been a very important factor of this progress," Associate Professor Canudas-Romo said.

"For other countries, like Trinidad and Tobago, there has been no improvement at all.

"Honduran females and Mexican males are really falling behind. Mexican males lost close to half a year of life expectancy due to homicide, while Jamaican males gained more than that thanks to reductions of violent deaths."

The study, Youth lost to homicides: disparities in survival in Latin America and the Caribbean, has been published in the *BMJ Global Health* journal.

More information: Canudas-Romo V, Aburto JM Youth lost to homicides: disparities in survival in Latin America and the Caribbean. *BMJ Global Health* 2019;4:e001275.
gh.bmj.com/content/4/2/e001275.info

Provided by Australian National University

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