

Children's firearm injuries up during the pandemic

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There was a surge in pediatric firearm injuries presenting to U.S.

children's hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study published online Dec. 19 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Stephanie E. Iantorno, M.D., from University of Utah School of Medicine in Salt Lake City, and colleagues examined contemporary trends in pediatric firearm injuries before (April 2018 to December 2019) and during the [pandemic](#) (April 2020 to December 2021) to determine whether sociodemographic risk factors were similar. Analysis included administrative data from the Pediatric Health Information System on 4,574 children younger than 18 years old diagnosed with firearm injury.

The researchers found a 52 percent increase in firearm injury diagnoses (1,815 before versus 2,759 during the pandemic). There was a significant increase observed in the monthly median number of firearm injuries (128 during versus 86 before the pandemic). A greater proportion of non-Hispanic Black [children](#) (62 versus 67 percent), those aged 0 to 5 years (12 versus 15 percent), and those with public insurance (76 versus 80 percent) had firearm injuries during versus before the pandemic. Firearm injuries by sex, household income, rurality, region, mortality, and intent were similar before and during the pandemic. When controlling for all covariates, the COVID-19 pandemic was independently associated with increased monthly firearm injuries.

"These data can inform health policy and support advocacy efforts to prevent [firearm injuries](#) and prepare health systems to provide robust, trauma-informed care," the authors write.

More information: Stephanie E. Iantorno et al, Surge in Pediatric Firearm Injuries Presenting to US Children's Hospitals During the COVID-19 Pandemic, *JAMA Pediatrics* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2022.4881](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2022.4881)

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