

Perceived access to firearms higher in teens with depression, suicidality

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High school-aged teens with recent depression and/or lifetime history of

suicidality (DLHS) have higher perceived access to firearms than their peers without DLHS, according to a study published online May 22 in *Pediatrics*.

Maya Haasz, M.D., from the University of Colorado School of Medicine in Aurora, and colleagues conducted a probability-based, cross-sectional web survey of 1,914 parent-teen dyads between June 24 and July 22, 2020, to estimate the prevalence of firearm possession and access among high school-aged [teens](#) (aged 14 to 18 years) with recent DLHS.

The researchers found that 22.6 percent of high school-aged teens reported DLHS, and 11.5 and 44.2 percent reported personal firearm possession and endorsed firearm access, respectively. Perceived access was increased for teens experiencing DLHS compared with non-DLHS [peers](#) (adjusted odd ratio, 1.56). No association was seen between DLHS and personal firearm possession. Among teens reporting firearm possession, those with DLHS were more likely to have bought or traded for it and less likely to have received it as a gift (odds ratios, 5.66 and 0.06, respectively).

"These findings highlight additional opportunities for [prevention](#), both through individual-level health care provider counseling of parents and teens, as well as policy-level interventions that limit teen access to firearms," the authors write.

More information: Maya Haasz et al, Firearms Availability Among High-School Age Youth With Recent Depression or Suicidality, *Pediatrics* (2023). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2022-059532](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2022-059532)

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