

Social vulnerability tied to higher assault-related firearm death rates for youth

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States with restrictive gun laws have lower rates of assault-related

firearm deaths among youths, but youths from socially vulnerable communities are disproportionately impacted across the spectrum of state gun laws, according to a study published online May 24 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Eustina G. Kwon, M.D., M.P.H., from Seattle Children's Hospital, and colleagues assessed the rate of death due to assault-related firearm injury by community-level social vulnerability and state-level gun laws. The Gun Violence Archive was used to identify all 5,813 assault-related firearm deaths among U.S. youths (aged 10 to 19 years) between Jan. 1, 2020, and June 30, 2022.

The researchers found that the death rate in the low social vulnerability index (SVI) cohort was 1.2 per 100,000 person-years versus 2.5 in the moderate SVI cohort, 5.2 in the high SVI cohort, and 13.3 in the very high SVI cohort. Comparing the very high to the low SVI cohort, the mortality rate ratio was 11.43. The stepwise increase in death rate with increasing SVI persisted, regardless of whether the Census tract was in a state with restrictive gun laws (0.83 in the low SVI cohort versus 10.11 in the very high SVI cohort), moderate gun laws (0.81 in the low SVI cohort versus 13.18 in the very high SVI cohort), or permissive gun laws (1.68 in the low SVI cohort versus 16.03 in the very high SVI cohort). In states with permissive versus restrictive gun laws, for each SVI category, the [death](#) rate per 100,000 person-years was higher (moderate SVI: 3.37 versus 1.71; high SVI: 6.33 versus 3.78).

"These findings suggest that [legislation](#) may not be sufficient to solve the problem of assault-related [firearm](#) deaths among children and adolescents," the authors write.

More information: Eustina G. Kwon et al, Association of Community Vulnerability and State Gun Laws With Firearm Deaths in Children and Adolescents Aged 10 to 19 Years, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI:](#)

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