

# Survivors of firearm injury carry long term physical and mental burdens that are poorly understood

May 22 2023

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A timely research report evaluating firearm injury survivors has found that despite medical advancements that improve survival from firearm

injuries, many survivors experience long-term post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and poor physical quality of life. The report is published in *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Firearm injury is a [public health crisis](#) in the United States. Organizations including the American College of Physicians and *Annals of Internal Medicine* have called for the consideration of long-term consequences of firearm violence. Interpersonal firearm violence survivors report significantly worse [physical health](#) and functioning compared with the [general population](#) and other mechanisms of traumatic injury. Yet, there is limited work examining self-reported mental and physical health consequences of firearm violence for survivors acutely after injury, thwarting health care systems' ability to comprehensively intervene.

Researchers from Medical College of Wisconsin studied 87 survivors of firearm injury from 2014 to 2016 and from 2017 to 2021 to describe the mental health symptoms and health-related quality of life of firearm injury survivors. Participants were evaluated at baseline and at 6 months after injury. The authors found that participants experienced chronic PTSD symptoms across time and worsened symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. Participants also reported poor health-related quality of life at both baseline and 6 months from injury, but their quality of life did not worsen during this period.

According to the authors, this preliminary study highlights the need to better understand and manage the mental health consequences of firearm injury. They suggest that early screening and comprehensive care may improve outcomes in this at-risk population.

**More information:** Mental Health and Health-Related Quality of Life After Firearm Injury: A Preliminary Descriptive Study, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2023). [DOI: 10.7326/M23-0309](https://doi.org/10.7326/M23-0309)

Provided by American College of Physicians

Citation: Survivors of firearm injury carry long term physical and mental burdens that are poorly understood (2023, May 22) retrieved 25 June 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-05-survivors-firearm-injury-term-physical.html>

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