

Firearms continue to be leading cause of death in US children

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In 2021, firearms continued to be a leading cause of death among U.S.

children, with a 41.6 percent increase in the firearm death rate from 2018 to 2021, according to a study published online Aug. 21 in *Pediatrics*.

Bailey K. Roberts, M.D., from the Cohen Children's Medical Center in Queens, New York, and colleagues queried the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research for firearm mortalities in children from 2018 to 2021.

The researchers found that firearms continued to be the leading cause of death in U.S. children in 2021. There was a 46.1 percent increase in the firearm death rate from 2018 to 2021. Among children who died by firearms in 2021, 84.8 percent were male, 49.9 percent were Black, 82.6 percent were aged 15 to 19 years, and 64.3 percent died by homicide.

Of firearm homicides, 67.3 percent were among Black children; from 2020 to 2021, there was an increase in the death rate of 1.8. Of firearm suicides, 78.4 percent were among White children. The suicide rate increased among Black and White children from 2020 to 2021 but decreased among American Indian or Alaskan Native children.

Worsening clusters of firearm death rates were seen in Southern states, and increasing rates were seen in Midwestern states from 2018 to 2021. Higher poverty levels correlated with higher firearm death rates across the United States.

"These findings highlight the necessity and urgency of real-time epidemiologic surveillance of this epidemic and implementation of evidence-informed strategies to prevent pediatric [firearm](#) fatalities among children and adolescents at highest risk," the authors write.

More information: Bailey K. Roberts et al, Trends and Disparities in Firearm Deaths Among Children, *Pediatrics* (2023). [DOI:](#)

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