

The health and economic impact of youth violence in the US reached \$122 billion in 2020

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In 2020, the cost of youth violence in the United States was approximately \$122 billion, according to [new research](#) in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

The study quantifies the economic toll of homicides and nonfatal assaults of young people ages 10–24 years, differentiating by injury mechanisms (e.g., firearms, stabbings, and other methods). Youth homicide cost the US an estimated \$86 billion, of which firearm homicides contributed \$78 billion. Nonfatal assault injuries among youth cost \$36 billion.

Lead investigator Elizabeth M. Parker, Ph.D., Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta, explains, "We lose young people to violence every day in this country. Violence is a leading cause of injury and death among American youth. It affects all types of communities across our country, causing pain and suffering to individuals, families, and communities."

"The high economic cost is an important measure of the widespread problem of youth violence. Understanding it helps us grasp the broader consequences of violence and the critical importance of violence prevention programs, policies, and practices. We hope identifying the economic implications of youth violence will encourage active engagement and contribute to building safer communities for all."

The investigators used data from the CDC's publicly available Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) to analyze homicides and nonfatal assaults resulting in emergency department visits among youth ages 10–24 years in 2020, as well as analyze the average economic cost of those injuries. The estimate includes costs for [medical care](#), lost work and reduced quality of life but does not include costs to the criminal justice system.

The study segmented the data by the injury mechanism or cause (e.g., firearms, stabbings, etc.), which distinguishes it from other recent research on youth violence. Injuries from firearms and stabbings

accounted for 96% of youth homicides.

The findings highlight the importance of developing and implementing programs to address risk factors and prevent youth violence.

Dr. Parker adds, "Youth violence is preventable. We know there are strategies that work to prevent violence and ease the pain, suffering, and [economic burden](#) associated with [youth](#) nonfatal assault and [homicide](#). CDC developed [Resources for Action](#) that describe strategies with the best available evidence to help communities and states focus their [violence](#) prevention efforts to ensure safer and healthier communities for all."

These evidence-based approaches include, but are not limited to, early childhood home visitation programs, preschool enrichment with family engagement, mentoring or after-school programs, street outreach, and community norm change campaigns.

More information: Elizabeth M. Parker et al, The Health and Economic Impact of Youth Violence by Injury Mechanism, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.amepre.2023.12.019](#)

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