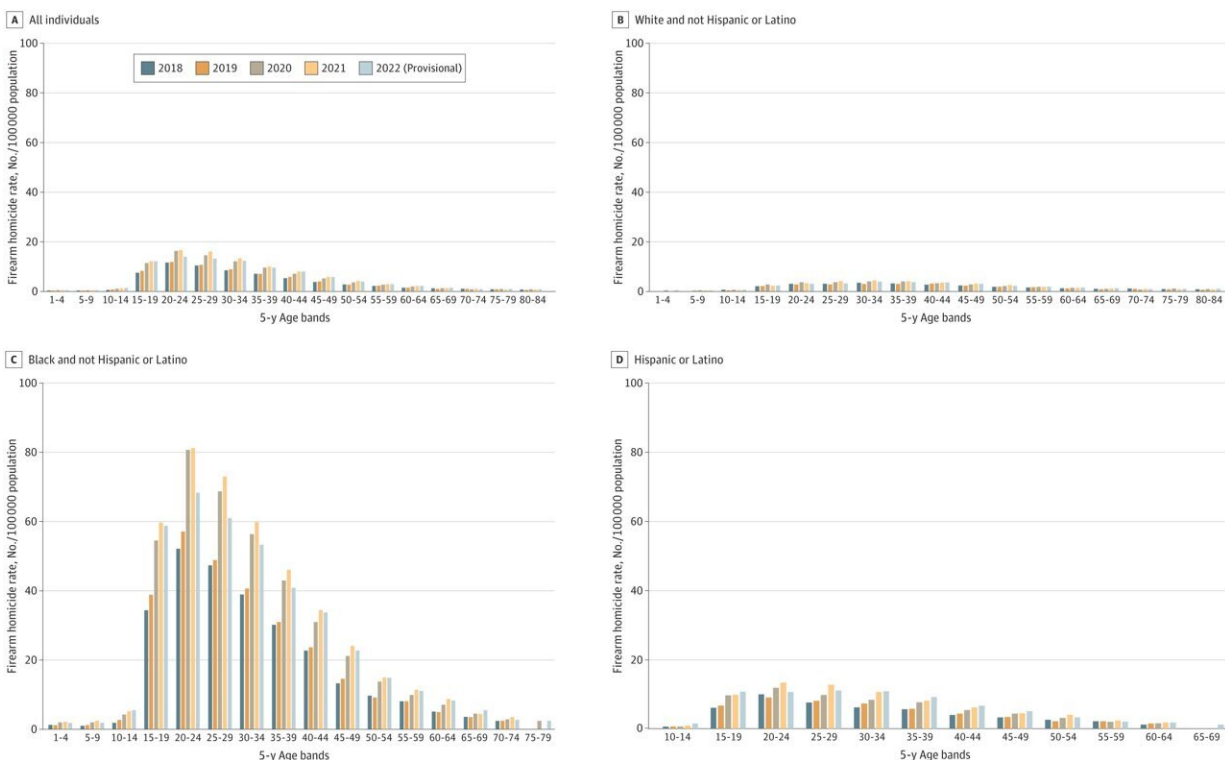


US homicides by firearms concentrated among Black youth before, during, and after the start of COVID-19 pandemic

July 23 2024



Firearm homicide victimization crude rates. Credit: *JAMA Network Open* (2024). DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.12946

In 2020, the United States saw the largest one-year increase in homicides since 1960. In a new study, researchers examined disparities in race and

ethnicity for deaths by firearm homicides from 2018 to 2022, before, during, and after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. They found that deaths by firearm homicide were concentrated among Black 15- to 24-year-olds in all of the years studied, suggesting that social and structural conditions contributed to these racial disparities.

The article, by researchers at the University of Miami and the University of Chicago, [appeared](#) in *JAMA Network Open* as a research letter.

"Our findings have implications for prevention and intervention strategies to address the needs of individuals at highest risk," says Alex R. Piquero, professor of sociology and criminology at the University of Miami, who coauthored the study. Piquero and his co-author, John K. Roman, director of the Center on Safety and Public Justice at the University of Chicago, are experts whose work is promoted by the NCJA Crime and Justice Research Alliance.

The spike in [homicides](#) in 2020 began in the first few months of the year, accelerating during the early months of the pandemic, emergency measures, the murder by police of George Floyd, and subsequent social protests. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the rise was largely due to [firearm](#) injuries: While the overall homicide rate increased 29%, the firearm homicide rate rose 35%.

Using a CDC online database, the study found that the rise in violence was concentrated within certain demographic groups. Of the more than 19,000 victims of firearms homicide that year, 61% were Black individuals and they experienced firearm homicide at 14 times the rate of White individuals in 2020. This racial disparity did not exist for other types of violence. Finally, the largest increases in death by firearm homicide were for Black men between 10 and 44 years old.

"Based on our study, we believe that strategies to mitigate this violence

must involve [law enforcement](#), [community groups](#), educators, and health care professions," suggests Roman.

More information: Alex R. Piquero et al, Firearm Homicide Demographics Before and After the COVID-19 Pandemic, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.12946](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.12946)

Provided by Crime and Justice Research Alliance

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