



Amendment II (the Second Amendment) of the United States Constitution, part of the Bill of Rights, declares:

“A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

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Introduction

There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.

This well-known saying is part of a phrase attributed to Benjamin Disraeli (former British prime minister in the 1800s) and popularized by Mark Twain. The statement refers to the persuasive power of numbers, and powerfully describes how even accurate statistics can be used to bolster inaccurate arguments.

Statistic truth is in the eye of the prepared - the source of the survey. Statistics can be generated to bolster any argument even in the face of insurmountable indicators against

it. Statistic generation wade through the mud of variables which like a herd of cats are near impossible to control. For example, statistical surveys are influenced by the researcher's

- bias,
- personal opinion,
- preparation, research and collection methods,
- sex,
- education,
- religion
- politics
- client
- rate of pay
- experience in life
- experience with the topic in question

Among others

The survey to collect the information can be influenced by:

- geographic location
- questionnaire type and length
- inflection of the interviewer
- audience demographics
- weather
- compilation methods
- analysis,
- computation and
- delivery.

Among others.

In other words statistics can be made to say anything.

When we look at the audience being questioned two glaring anomalies arise that have proven to be true in the experience of interviewing people over time:

1. People often lie, their answer often does not reflect the truth or their true feelings, as they may be embarrassed by them.
2. People like to give a pleasing answer to the interviewer telling them what they think they want to hear.

Our researchers at AFI provide extensive and ongoing research into the cause and effects of gun ownership and violence. Why? To counter the heavy slant in the media against gun-owners and gun ownership.

One common thread throughout all of our investigation can be found early in the literature being analyzed and that that is the bias of the researcher who compiled the numbers, who believe it or not, are usually anti-gun. Once that has been determined, you realize, the numbers presented are statistically and practically useless because of their inherent skew.

After wading through countless studies, research and medical papers about firearms and gun control, they all - with a tiny exception - enter their research pre-determined to prove that firearms are bad. And that legal firearm holders are irresponsible and need to be controlled. Their research methodology -who they interviewed, when and how, - leaves a lot to be desired.

American Firearm Institute's Approach to Statistical Research

To counter this bias our researchers examine indirect resorts that don't have firearms as their primary focus. For example, crime statistics from the Department of Justice. Similar numbers from the World Health Organization and Governmental numbers from the Home Office in Britain. They are then cross checked with other reports and we garner our conclusions from that.

Societal problems and the mis-use of firearms - the real issue

On close examination of the much touted reports connecting crime and homicide with firearms, are glaring issues that are completely ignored even though they exist as if

surrounded by flashing neon lights.

Crime and homicide survive in the following fertile breeding grounds:

1. Poverty
2. Alcohol abuse
3. Drug use
4. Inner City Cycle of Violence

Firearms are brought into the equation as means of protection and enforcement. Tackle these issues of 1 - 4 and you'll solve, to a large degree, the problems of violence in society. But they go ignored. The easier route is to "ban the gun" and in doing so what happens? Nothing.

For firearms critics guns are tangible and visible and attacking them, vilifying them polarizes voters into agreeing to something that seeks to provide a quick fix to a problem that will not go away. Tackling issues 1 through 4 above are too difficult, their range and lifecycle too long for a 4-year politician to tackle. Politicians survive from visible sound-bite issues like gun control. And so these issues go unresolved and 150 million American firearm owners pay the price as they are pushed step by step through increasingly oppressive gun control toward becoming unwitting and unwilling criminals.

Firearm Research

In the United States, research into firearms and violent crime is fraught with difficulties, associated with limited data on gun ownership and use, firearms markets, and aggregation of crime data. Research studies into gun violence have primarily taken one of two approaches: case-control studies and social ecology. Gun ownership is usually determined through surveys, proxy variables, and sometimes with production and import figures. In statistical analysis of homicides and other types of crime which are rare events, these data tend to have poisson distributions, which also presents methodological challenges to researchers. With data aggregation, it is difficult to make inferences about individual behavior. This problem, known as ecological fallacy, is not always handled properly by researchers, leading some to jump to conclusions that their data do not necessarily support. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_violence_in_the_United_States#_note-NAS-ch4]

Firearms and firearm ownership

Depending on what statistics you read:

- there are 250 - 280 million firearms in the US
- 40 - 50% of US homes own a firearm, that's 120 - 150 million people

Trends in Violent Crime

The late 1990s saw promising decreases in violent crime in large cities, providing an important opportunity to identify factors that might be used to further reduce firearm violence. The decrease was likely the result of several factors that include:

- The collection of location-specific crime data, the analysis of those data, and the
- development of strategies to efficiently allocate police resources.
- Improving troubled neighborhoods.
- Stricter sentencing and stricter laws to keep felons from obtaining firearms.

[Blumstein A, Rosenfeld R. Assessing the recent ups and downs in US homicide rates. National Institute of Justice Journal, October 1998: 9-11. Full article Available: The Journal of Law and Criminology, 1998; 88(4).]

Defensive Gun Use

Guns are popularized as effective protection against crime and injury. The discussion of victimization and homicide offense begs the question of whether or not guns have a deterrent effect. The answers to this question vary widely.

One effort to quantify the benefit of firearm ownership estimates that guns are used for self-defense in the United States as many as 2.5 million times each year. (1)

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) yields a more conservative estimate, approximately 100,000 defensive gun uses (DGU) each year. (2)

Estimating the number of times guns are used for protection is a difficult task with

inconclusive validity. The former estimate, for example, extrapolates low prevalence events - that is, few survey respondents report having used a gun to defend themselves - and can yield gross overestimates of the population that actually used a gun in defense. (3)

Conversely, the NCVS does not ask about all crimes nor does it specifically ask respondents if they had used a gun in self-defense. (4)

Additionally, survey respondents in the NCVS estimate may be reluctant to reveal illegal use or ownership of a firearm. There is no information on the incidence of offensive gun use, i.e. use of guns to intimidate or threaten, especially between intimates.

1. Kleck G, Bates D. Chapter 7. In: Armed: New Perspectives on Gun Control. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2001.
2. Cook P, Ludwig J, Hemenway D. The gun debate's new mythical number: how many defensive uses per year? *Journal of policy analysis and management*, 1997; 16(3):463-9.
3. Hemenway D. Survey research and self-defense gun use: an explanation of extreme overestimates. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 2002; 87(2).
4. Kleck G, Gertz M. Armed resistance to crime: the prevention and nature of self-defense with a gun. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*. 1995; 86: 150-87]

Suicide and Firearms

The USA has a lower suicide rate than Japan where firearms are just not available nor socially acceptable, and marginally higher than Australia and Ireland where gun control is absolute. Suicide itself is the issue that needs to be tackled not the means of completion.

Suicide rates per 100,000 by country, year and sex

Country	Year	Males	Females
Japan	04	35.6	12.8
Finland	04	31.7	9.4
France	03	27.5	9.1
Switzerland	04	23.7	11.3
United States	02	17.1	4.2
Australia	03	17.1	4.7
Ireland	05	16.3	3.2

Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death among Americans. (1) More people die each year in the U.S. from suicide than from homicide. A firearm is the most commonly used method to commit suicide (54%). The firearm suicide rate has remained virtually unchanged over the past two decades. (2)

Kochanek KD, Murphy SL, Anderson RN, Scott C. Deaths: final data for 2002. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 2004; 50(15). US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention WISQARS database. Available at: www.cdc.gov

About 80% (13,809) of the firearm suicide victims were white males, a rate of 11.92 per 100,000 population.

There are two suicide incidence peaks:

- 13% under age 25 and,
- 18% over age 64. (1)

Although females are an estimated 3 times more likely to attempt suicide, males are more likely to use a firearm (2); consequently, more male suicide attempts are fatal. In 2002, firearms accounted for 59% of suicides among males and 33% among females.

1. Kochanek KD, Murphy SL, Anderson RN, Scott C. Deaths: final data for 2002.

- National Vital Statistics Reports, 2004; 50(15).
- American Association of Suicidology. U.S.A. Suicide: 2002 Official Final Data. Website: <http://www.suicidology.org>. Accessed April 5, 2005.
 - US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention WISQARS database. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>. Accessed April 18, 2005.
 - Kochanek KD, Murphy SL, Anderson RN, Scott C. Deaths: final data for 2002. National Vital Statistics Reports, 2004; 50(15).]

The risk for death from firearm suicide is highest among white males over age 75 (1)

- Firearm suicides are more prevalent among Hispanics and American Indians and Alaskan Natives compared to other ethnic groups, especially among males
- Between 1979 and 1997, the rate of firearm suicide among African-American males ages 15-19 increased by 133 percent (from 3.6 per 100,000 to 8.4), while the rate among same-age white males increased 7 percent (from 9.7 per 100,000 to 10.4). (2)

Source: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC.]

- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention WISQARS database. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>. Accessed April 18, 2005.
- Joe J, Kaplan MS. Firearm-related suicide among young African-American males. *Psychiatric Services*, 2002; 53(3): 332-4]

Firearm Suicide, By Race/Ethnicity and Age-U.S., 1999-2002 Comparing selected age groups by race illustrates that the U.S. firearm suicide rate is highest among,

- White and Hispanic males over age 75 and
- Native American/Alaskan Native males ages 15-24.

Violent Crime in Europe and the USA

Violent crime in the US and Europe Overall robbery and assault rates in the United States are comparable to other developed countries, such as Australia and Finland, notwithstanding the much lower levels of gun ownership in those countries.

[a b Kleck, Gary (2004). "Measures of Gun Ownership Levels of Macro-Level Crime and Violence Research". *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 41: pp. 3-36. NCJ 203876.]

In Britain based on year 2000 statistics supplied by UK Home Office the following percentages of the population of these countries were exposed to crime. Among the countries compared the USA has the lowest number of incidents. The UK and Australia do not allow ownership of handguns. About 3% of the Germany population own firearms.

- The lowest rate - for the year 200 period in the USA there were 11,605,751 incidents of reported crime based on a population of 300,000,000 (06) - 3.87% of the population was exposed to crime
- Australia which does not allow ownership of handguns had a reported crime rate of 1,431,929 based on a population of 20,000,000 - 7.16% of the population was exposed to crime.
- Germany with a population of 82 million (05) has a reported 6,264,723 crimes or 7.64% of the population was exposed to crime.
- In Britain there were 5,170,843 incidents of reported crime to the police based on a population of 60, 587,000 (06) - 8.5% of the population was exposed to crime.
- Highest rate - New Zealand with a population of 4,000,000 (06) had a reported crime with 427,230 incidents - 10.68% of the population was exposed to crime.

www.homeoffice.gov/uk

Editor's note: When comparing European and US violent death from firearm statistics, Europeans are apt to describe the US a barbaric with regard to firearm ownership and mis-use. Looking over the past 90 years of European history these are interesting terms from a continent that brought the world 83 million violent deaths in two world wars including civilians.

Crime and firearms

The number of handguns used in crime (approximately 7,500 per year) is very small compared to the approximately 70 million handguns in the United States (i.e., 0.011%) [Committee on Law and Justice (2004). "Chapter 4", Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review. National Academy of Science.]

People with a criminal record are more likely to die as homicide victims. Does Gun Prohibition Work?

Washington D.C. enacted a virtual ban on handguns in 1976. Between 1976 and 1991, Washington D.C.'s homicide rate rose 200%, while the U.S. rate rose 12%.

According to *Crime in the United States 2004*, second to firearms, knives and cutting instruments were the weapons most frequently used by persons committing homicides in the United States. Offenders employed knives to kill members of the general public more than they used rifles and shotguns combined.

During 2003 and 2004, approximately 117,973 law enforcement personnel in the United States were feloniously assaulted...Many of the offenders stated that their motivation for assaulting an officer was to avoid going to jail.

The top ten guns used in crime

The top ten guns used in crime, as reported by the ATF in 1993, included,

1. Smith & Wesson .38 Special
2. Smith & Wesson .357 revolver
3. Raven Arms .25 caliber
4. Davis P-380 .380 caliber
5. Ruger .22 caliber
6. Lorcin L-380 .380 caliber
7. Smith & Wesson semi-automatic handguns;
8. Mossberg 12 gauge shotgun
9. Remington 12 gauge shotgun
10. Tec DC-9L

[LaPierre, Wayne (1994). *Guns, Crime, and Freedom*. Regnery Publishing, Inc., Washington, DC, p. 58]

Juvenile Crime and firearms

Among juveniles (i.e., minors under the age of 16, 17, or 18, depending on legal jurisdiction) serving in correctional facilities, 86% owned a gun at some point, with 66% acquiring their first gun by age 14. There is also a tendency for juvenile offenders to own many firearms, with 65% owning three or more. Juveniles most often acquire guns from family, friends, drug dealers, and street contacts. Inner-city youths cite "self-protection from enemies" as the top reason for carrying a gun.

Lizotte, Alan J., Gregory J. Howard, Marvin D. Krohn, Terence P. Thornberry (1997).

"Patterns of Illegal Gun Carrying Among Urban Young Males". *Valparaiso University Law Review* 31(2)]

Crime Statistics

In 2005, 24% of the incidents of violent crime, a weapon was present - not necessarily a firearm.

Offenders had or used a weapon in 48% of all robberies, compared with 22% of all aggravated assaults and 7% of all rapes/sexual assaults in 2005.

Homicides are most often committed with guns, especially handguns. In 2005, 55% of homicides were committed with handguns, 16% with other guns, 14% with knives, 5% with blunt objects, and 11% with other weapons (30% non-firearm)

[http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict_c.htm#weapon]

Weapons and violent crime

Weapons and violent crime Between 1993 and 2001, about 26% (or an annual average of 2.3 million) of the estimated 8.9 million violent crimes in the United States were committed by offenders armed with guns, knives, or objects used as weapons. Of all violent crimes,

- 10% firearm violence accounted
- 6% were committed with a knife or other sharp object such as scissors, ice pick, or broken bottle;

- 4% with blunt objects such as a brick, bat, or bottle; and
- 5% were committed with unspecified/ "other" objects used as weapons.

Offender use of firearms

Of incidents involving offenders with firearms, victims -

- were shot (3%)
- were shot at but not hit (8%)
- were struck with a firearm (4%)
- were threatened with a firearm (72%)
- did not describe offender's use of firearms (13%)

Assault Weapons

Banning so called assault weapons makes little sense. Assault weapons by definition are weapons with selective fire rates including fully automatic fire - machine guns. Machine guns were banned in the US in 1934. Military type arms sold in the US today are semi-automatic only, meaning you get one shot for each trigger pull. These weapons barely register in homicide statistics at all. They look good in the arms of politicians though. In 2005, 75% of the 10,100 homicides committed using firearms in the United States were committed using handguns, compared to 4% with rifles, 5% with shotguns, and the rest with a type of firearm not specified. Assault weapons are so rarely used they don't qualify for a separate category.

[American Firearms Institute - editor, 2007-10-07, also 2005 statistics from Cook, Philip J., Jens Ludwig (2000). "Chapter 2", Gun Violence: The Real Costs. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-513793-0]

TYPES OF ACCIDENTAL DEATHS, USA 2002

ACCIDENT PERCENT

1. Motor vehicle (MVA) - 44.3%
2. Falls - 17.8%
3. Poison, liq/solid - 13.0%
4. Drowning - 3.9%
5. Fires, Burns, Smoke - 3.4%
6. Medical/Surgical Complication - 3.1%
7. Other land transport - 1.5%
8. Firearms - 0.8%
9. Other (non-transport) Other non transport - 17.8%

[Source: National Vital Statistics Report, Volume 50, Number 15 (September 2002)]

Homicide Demographics in the USA

Social environments, such as a concentration of poverty, may support community norms that increase levels of violence.

Firearm injury in the US [Firearm and Injury Center at Penn]

According to the FBI the demographic characteristics of homicide victims and offenders differ from the general population

Based on data for the years 1976-2005 -

- Blacks are disproportionately represented as both homicide victims and offenders.
- The victimization rates for blacks were 6 times higher than those for whites.
- The offending rates for blacks were more than 7 times higher the rates for whites.
- Males represent 77% of homicide victims and nearly 90% of offenders. The victimization rates for males were 3 times higher than the rates for females.
- The offending rates for males were 8 times higher than the rates for females.
- Approximately one-third of murder victims and almost half the offenders are under the age of 25.
- For both victims and offenders, the rate per 100,000 peaks in the 18-24 year-old age group.

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, 1950-2005 [<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>]

/bjs/homicide/hmrt.htm#longterm]

The role of alcohol in crime victimization

About 1 million violent crimes occurred in 2002 in which victims perceived the offender to have been drinking at the time of the offense. Among those victims who provided information about the offender's use of alcohol, about 30% of the victimizations involved an offender who had been drinking.

Two-thirds of victims who suffered violence by an intimate (a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend) reported that alcohol had been a factor. Among spouse victims, 3 out of 4 incidents were reported to have involved an offender who had been drinking. By contrast, an estimated 31% of stranger victimizations where the victim could determine the absence or presence of alcohol were perceived to be alcohol-related.

For about 1 in 5 violent victimizations involving perceived alcohol use by the offender.

Bureau of Justice Statistics - Special Report National Crime Victimization Survey, 1993-2001

Weapon Use and Violent Crime

- Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) indicate that between 1993 and 2001 - about 10% of the violent victimizations involved a firearm - approximately 26% of the average annual 8.9 million violent victimizations were committed by offenders armed with a weapon.
- From 1993 through 2001 violent crime declined 54%; weapon violence went down 59%; and firearm violence, 63%.
- Males, American Indians, and Hispanics, the young, and those with the lowest annual household income were more vulnerable to weapon violence in general and firearm violence in particular than their respective counterparts.
- For the 9-year period beginning with 1993, 23% of white victims of violence and 36% of black victims were victims of violence involving an offender armed with a weapon.
- About 7% of white victims and 17% of black victims were involved in incidents in which an offender was armed with a gun.
- Blacks were about 9 times more likely than whites to be victims of gun-related homicides (25 per 100,000 blacks age 12 or older versus 3 per 100,000 whites.)
- Firearm violence rates for blacks age 12 or older (8.4 per 1,000 blacks) were - 40% higher than rates for Hispanics (6.0), - 200% higher than rates for whites (2.8 per 1,000).
- Blacks were about 9 times more likely than whites to be murdered with a firearm.
- On average black victims of firearm violence were 3 years younger than white victims - 29 versus 32.
- From 1993 through 2001 blacks accounted for 49% of homicide victims and 54% of victims of firearm homicide but 12% of the U.S. population.
- The likelihood of an injury was the same for victims facing armed and unarmed offenders (26%); serious injury was more likely from armed offenders (7% versus 2%).
- From 1993 through 2001 the number of murders declined 36% while the number of murders by firearms dropped 41%.
- From 1994 through 1999, the years for which data are available, about 7 in 10 murders at school involved some type of firearm, and approximately 1 in 2 murders at school involved a handgun.

Where does armed violence occur?

The most common locales for armed violence and gun violence were the streets: those away from the victim's home (30% of violence with a weapon and 35% of gun violence) and those at or near the victim's home (27% of armed violence and 25% of gun violence).

Race and ethnicity

- For each type of weapon, victimization rates for whites were lower than those for blacks or Hispanics.
- Blacks were victimized by offenders armed with guns at higher rates than Hispanics but at similar rates as American Indians.

- Blacks had similar victimization rates as Hispanics for crimes committed with knives or blunt objects/other weapons.
- The rate of firearm violence for blacks was more than twice that for whites (8 versus 3 per 1,000). The rate for Hispanics (6 per 1,000) was about twice that for whites.
- No significant differences separated the rates at which whites and blacks were victimized by unarmed offenders.

The rate of armed violence for American Indians (25 per 1,000 American Indians) was:

- 43% higher than the rate for blacks (18 per 1,000 blacks)
- 78% higher than the rate for Hispanics (14 per 1,000 Hispanics)
- 184% higher than the rate for whites (9 per 1,000).

Younger persons, particularly those age 18-20, had higher rates of victimization by armed offenders. The rate of firearm violence was also highest for persons age 18-20. Their rate (12 per 1,000 persons) was about 40% higher than the rate for persons ages 15 to 17 and 21 to 24.

Annual Household Income

Persons with annual household incomes of less than \$7,500 experienced both armed violence and firearm violence at about 3 times the rates of persons with annual household incomes of \$50,000 or more (23.1 versus 7.3 armed victimizations per 1,000 persons, and 8.4 versus 2.4 firearm victimizations, respectively)

At almost every level of household income, blacks were more vulnerable than whites and Hispanics to violence involving a weapon and involving a firearm

Time of incident

Violent crimes at night were more likely than crimes occurring during the day to involve a weapon (30% versus 21%, respectively) or a firearm (12% versus 6%, respectively). Three of every five crimes committed by an offender with a firearm occurred at night.

Activity and location

Crime by armed offenders was most likely to occur while the victim was engaged in leisure activity away from home (27%) or traveling to or from work or school (23%). Nearly 21% of victims of armed violence were involved in some activity at home at the time of the incident. The most common location for crimes by armed offenders was on the street away from the victim's home (30%). About 25% of all violence by armed offenders occurred at or near the victim's home. About 6% of armed violence, and 2% of firearm violence occurred at a school or on school grounds.

Victim-offender relationship

Crimes committed by intimates were less likely than crimes committed by strangers to involve a weapon. The offender was armed in 33% of all violence by a stranger and in a 16.5% of all violence committed by an intimate. Victims of crimes by strangers were also more likely than victims of crimes by intimates to be confronted by an offender with a firearm (14% versus 5%, respectively).

Trends

Violent victimization rates declined from 1993 to 2001. Rates for crimes committed with firearms reflected a larger decrease than did the rates for overall violence and armed violence in general. Between 1993 and 2001 overall violence decreased 54%, armed violence fell 59%, and firearm violence declined 63%.

The rates of firearm violence for blacks and Hispanics fell relatively more than the rate for whites, 1993-2001. In 1993 blacks and Hispanics were victims of firearm violence at a rate of 13 firearm crimes per 1,000 persons, about 3 times the rate for whites. By 2001 the rate for blacks had fallen to about 4 per 1,000, roughly 2.5 times that for whites. In 2001 Hispanics experienced firearm violence at a rate per 1,000 similar to those for both blacks and whites.

From 1993 to 2001, rates of violence involving firearms declined among all age groups.

The decline was greatest among the youngest victims: by 2001, persons age 12-14 had experienced a 97% decrease in the rate of firearm violence, and those age 15-17, a 77% decrease.

Race

From 1993 to 2001, blacks were 12% of the U.S. population age 12 or older but 49% of all homicide victims and 54% of all victims of firearm homicide. Among homicide victims, blacks were more likely than whites to have been killed with a firearm. About 8 in 10 black homicide victims and 7 in 10 white homicide victims died from gunshot injuries.

Blacks were about 7 times more likely than whites to be a homicide victim (30 versus 4 per 100,000 persons age 12 or older respectively), and approximately 9 times more likely to be a victim of a homicide committed with a firearm (25 versus 3 per 100,000 persons age 12 or older, respectively).

Victim self-defense

Between 1993 and 2001, about 61% of all victims of violent crime reported taking a self-defensive measure during the incident. Most used nonaggressive means, such as trying to escape, getting help, or attempting to scare off or warn the offender. About 13% of victims of violent crime tried to attack or threaten the offender.

About 2% of victims of violent crime used a weapon to defend themselves; half of these, about 1% of violent crime victims, brandished a firearm.

- Editor's note. Not every gun owner is going to admit brandishing a weapon when asked if they did if there is no need to do so. Many are afraid of arrest or harassment.

Cycle of Violence

Psychological Impact Studies have shown an increase in depression and stress as the result of violence, but few studies have discussed the consequences of firearm violence in particular. People living with the threat of violence change their social behavior as they adapt to the increased risk of violence.

Given the unexpected nature of physical trauma, a violent event can become a defining moment in the injured person's life. In response to the injury, the survivor separates his/her life into "before injury" and "after injury".⁵⁷ Survivors of traumatic injury experience increased levels of posttraumatic psychological distress and depression and are forever changed by their injury. (1, 2, 3)

Children are exposed to community violence at disturbingly high rates, particularly in the inner city. It is estimated that one quarter of low income urban youth have witnessed a murder. (4) Being abused, exposed to domestic violence, and having a mother using substances are associated with a higher number of health problems in children; in fact, the strongest predictors of poor child health are the mother's physical health and the child's level of traumatic stress. (5) Frequent exposure to violence is significantly associated with both internalizing symptoms and externalizing problem behaviors, including posttraumatic stress symptoms, depression, anxiety, dissociation and aggression. (6)

Psychosocial Repercussions

In addition to the impact highlighted above, firearm injury has longer term psychosocial repercussions. For example, children exposed to violence experience substance abuse, school failure, anxiety, and behavioral problems at higher levels. (6) The pervasive threat to society's sense of safety is not easily quantified. Whether a person's experience of firearm violence is firsthand, shots heard outside a window, or a story in the morning newspaper, his/her safety is called into question. As a result, many youth feel they must carry a weapon for a sense of protection, as well as to establish status and social identity. (7) In one study of youth, fear seems to contagiously drive violence as it feeds into the development of an "ecology of danger". (8)

1. Richmond TS, Thompson HJ, Dietrich JA, Kauder DR. Journey Towards Recovery Following Physical Trauma. *Journal Advanced Nursing*, 2000; 32(6): 1341-47.

2. Richmond TS, Kauder DR. Predictors of Psychological Distress Following Serious Injury. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 2000; 13(4): 681-92.
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5. Graham-Bermann SA, Seng J. Violence exposure and traumatic stress symptoms as additional predictors of health problems in high-risk children. *Journal of Pediatrics*, 2005; 146(3):349-54.
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The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)

The NCVS is the Nation's primary source of information on criminal victimization. Data are continuously obtained from a nationally representative sample of approximately 43,000 households comprising nearly 80,000 persons age 12 or older. Household members are asked about the frequency, characteristics, and consequences of victimization. The survey enables the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to estimate the rate of victimization for rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, robbery, assault, theft, household burglary, and motor vehicle theft. The rates describe the vulnerability to crime by the population as a whole as well as by segments of the population such as women, the elderly, members of racial and ethnic groups, and city dwellers. For the most current estimates of criminal victimization in the United States, see *Criminal Victimization 2001: Changes 2000-2001 with Trends 1993-2001*.

Note: These pages will be added to and updated regularly

Leading Causes of Death in the United States

As compiled from data reported by the National Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 50, No. 15, September 16, 2002

Leading Causes of Death in the United States

Note: In the yellow row, "Total Number of Deaths," the percentages answer the question, "Of the total number of deaths for all ages in the United States, what percent was attributed to each age group."

In the white rows, percentages answer the question, "Of the total number of deaths for all ages in each 'Cause of Death,' what percentage was attributed to each age group."

Cause of Death/Age Range	All Ages	Under 1 Yr	1-4 yrs	5-14yrs	15-24 yrs	25-34	35-44
Total Number of Deaths	2,403,351 100%	28,035 1.2%	4,979 0.2%	7,413 0.3%	3,1307 1.3%	40,451 1.7%	89,798 3.7%
Major Cardiovascular Diseases	936,923 39.0%	636 2.3%	234 4.7%	362 4.9%	1,309 4.2%	3792 9.4%	16,624 18.5%
Malignant Neoplasms	553,091 23.0%	92 0.3%	420 8.4%	1,014 13.7%	1713 5.9%	3916 9.7%	16,520 18.4%
Chronic Lower Respiratory Dis.	122,009 5.1%	36 0.1%	51 1.0%	139 1.9%	190 0.6%	296 0.7%	930 1.0%
Diabetes Mellitus	69,301 2.9%	4 0.0%	6 0.1%	26 0.4%	162 0.5%	623 1.5%	1,926 2.1%
Influenza and Pneumonia	65,313 2.7%	289 1.0%	103 2.1%	87 1.2%	189 0.6%	364 0.9%	1,068 1.2%
Alzheimer's	49,558 2.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 0.0%	6 0.0%
Motor Vehicle Accidents	43,354 1.8%	168 0.6%	651 13.1%	1,772 23.9%	10,560 33.7%	6,884 17.0%	6,927 7.7%
Renal Failure	3,6471 1.5%	152 0.5%	11 0.2%	19 0.3%	78 0.2%	221 0.5%	701 0.8%
Septicemia	3,1224 1.3%	274 1.0%	99 2.0%	63 0.8%	100 0.3%	280 0.7%	877 1.0%
Firearms	28,663 1.2%	13 0.0%	46 0.9%	377 5.1%	6,575 21.0%	5,769 14.3%	5,358 6.0%

NOTE: Firearms Statistics Include Gang Warfare, Self Defense Shootings and Criminals Killed by Police

Cause of Death/Age Range	45-54		55-64		65-74		75-84		85 and over		Not stated	
Total Number of Deaths	160,341	6.7%	240,846	10.0%	441,209	18.4%	700,445	29.1%	658,171	27.4%	356	0.0%
Major Cardiovascular Diseases	43,583	27.2%	77,482	32.2%	156,187	35.4%	296,202	42.3%	340,450	51.7%	62	17.4%
Malignant Neoplasm's	48,034	30.0%	89,005	37.0%	150,131	34.0%	165,009	23.6%	77,136	11.7%	11	3.1%
Chronic Lower Respiratory Dis.	3,251	2.0%	10,739	4.5%	31,157	7.1%	47,722	6.8%	27,496	4.2%	2	0.6%
Diabetes Mellitus	4,954	3.1%	9,186	3.8%	1,6674	3.8%	22,184	3.2%	13,556	2.1%	0	0.0%
Influenza and Pneumonia	1,774	1.1%	2,879	1.2%	7,189	1.6%	19,821	2.8%	31,547	4.8%	3	0.8%
Alzheimer's	64	0.0%	491	0.2%	3,431	0.8%	17,253	2.5%	28,309	4.3%	2	0.6%
Motor Vehicle Accidents	5,361	3.3%	3,506	1.5%	3,038	0.7%	3,173	0.5%	1,288	0.2%	26	7.3%
Renal Failure	1,590	1.0%	3,023	1.3%	6,848	1.6%	12,223	1.7%	11,603	1.8%	2	0.6%
Septicemia	1,845	1.2%	2,899	1.2%	8,704	2.0%	9,938	1.4%	9,144	1.4%	1	0.3%
Firearms	3,951	2.5%	2,272	0.9%	1,941	0.4%	1,723	0.2%	600	0.1%	18	5.1%



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