Firearm Injury Prevention: What Clinicians Can Do

Violence Prevention Research Program, University of California, Davis
February, 2019
On violence:

“If it’s not a health problem, then why are all those people dying from it?”

- Dr. David Satcher, 1993
All Those People

US, 2008-2017:
- 329,969 deaths from firearm violence (homicide, suicide)
- 342,439 total firearm deaths

US, 2017:
- 38,396 deaths from firearm violence
- 75% of homicides, 51% of suicides involved firearms

$229 B in aggregate costs for firearm death and injury in 2012, approximately 1.4% of GDP
Death Rates from Motor Vehicle Traffic Events and Firearms, 1950-2017

Deaths/100,000 Population

Year


Motor Vehicles

Firearms

VPRP
Death Rates from Firearm Homicide Males, 2017

Deaths/100,000 Population

Age


Black  Hispanic  White

VPRP  UC Davis
Death Rates from Firearm Suicide
Males, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Death Rates from Firearm Violence
Males, 2017

Deaths/100,000 Population

Age


VPRP
Deaths from Firearm Violence
Males, 2017
Death Rates from Firearm Homicide Females, 2017

Deaths/100,000 Population

Age


- Black
- Hispanic
- White

VPRP
Death Rates from Firearm Suicide
Females, 2017

Deaths/100,000 Population

Age


Black
Hispanic
White

VPRP
What Can Clinicians Do?
You Can Ask. Here’s When

- Intent to harm self or others (imminent risk)
- Individual risk factors
  - Present or prior violence
  - Alcohol abuse
  - Serious mental illness not meeting 5150 criteria
- Dementia or other cognitive impairment
- Abusive partners
- Demographic risk factors
Here’s How

• Be selective: risk factors first
• Recognize the opportunity and provide context
• Key points: access, storage
• Be nonjudgmental, non-prescriptive
• Be familiar with evidence and gaps
• Try using the 5 L’s:
You Can Disclose

HIPAA: Disclosure permitted when “necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public and...is to a person or persons reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat”
Benefits

• Improved storage (Including an RCT of SBIRT)
• Decreased access to high-risk persons in household
• Decreased weapon carrying among adolescents

More work needed!
Barriers

• Lack of familiarity with firearms
• Lack of familiarity with risks and benefits
• No time
• Concern for effectiveness
• Concern for reaction
  • Patients generally OK
• Personal belief (outside scope of practice)
What You Can Do to Stop Firearm Violence

Garen J. Wintemute, MD, MPH

Access the Comments feature to see who has committed to talk to their at-risk patients about firearm safety. **Make your commitment now.**

Mass shootings are reshaping the character of American public life. Whoever we
WHAT YOU CAN DO to stop firearm violence
What You Can Do highlights the potential of a simple, focused intervention that you, as a health care provider, can implement.

1. Ask your at-risk patients about firearms
2. Counsel them on safe firearm behaviors
3. Take further action when imminent hazard is present
The What You Can Do initiative

Provides background, guidance, and resources for talking with patients about firearms

http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/vprp/WYCD.html
What You Can Do educational handouts

For providers: a summary of clinical considerations, risk factors, and tips for counseling

For patients: a resource on firearm risk and safety to take home following the firearms conversation
References


