



Brady Research Update May 2010

This regular update is prepared by the Research Department of the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence. This issue has four sections: Gun Violence Prevention Studies, Research Resources, Upcoming Research/Research in Progress, and Opposition Research.

The report is informational and is not meant for publication. Selected research summaries are posted to the Brady website. All the studies have links to the abstract or full text version of the article, where available.

For past studies and all kinds of useful factual information, go to:
<http://www.bradycampaign.org/facts/>.

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Gun Violence Prevention Studies

Title: Felonious or Violent Criminal Activity That Prohibits Gun Ownership Among Prior Purchasers of Handguns: Incidence and Risk Factors

Brady URL: <http://www.bradycampaign.org/studies/view/179/>

Publication Date: May 2010

What Does It Say? This study posed the question: "Among legal handgun purchasers, are people with any criminal history more likely to commit crimes later in their lives that deny them gun ownership, than legal handgun purchasers with no criminal record at all?" The answer was "yes." The study used 1991 data on California handgun purchasers ages 21 to 49.

Federal law prohibits certain categories of criminals from purchasing guns, including those convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor domestic violence offense, those subject to a domestic violence restraining order, fugitives from justice, and other categories.

Many people who buy handguns legally have criminal histories - either convictions or arrests - that do not fall into the above categories and therefore do not prohibit gun ownership.

This study finds that the risk of becoming unable to legally buy a handgun because of being caught committing a disqualifying crime is much higher among people with prior convictions or arrests than among legal handgun purchasers with no criminal record.

Legal handgun purchasers with just one prior misdemeanor conviction were more than four times as likely to commit a crime for which gun ownership is prohibited. Likewise, handgun owners with two prior convictions were 10 times as likely to commit a crime for which gun ownership is prohibited, and handgun owners with 3 misdemeanor convictions were 14 times as likely to lose the ability to legally purchase a handgun under federal law (see Table 3).

More than 75 percent of the handgun purchasers with prior misdemeanor convictions who were later convicted of crimes that prohibited gun ownership had been charged with prohibiting offenses before purchasing their guns but were not convicted of those charges.

How Can I Use It? The study highlights the importance of - at a minimum - assuring a background check for each purchase of a handgun to screen out prohibited people at the current federal level of disqualification. Two strategies include extending Brady background checks to all sales, including those at gun shows, and discontinuing the practice of allowing CCW permits to be used to bypass the Brady background check for years at a time.

Additionally, the findings point to the potential of expanding the criteria for denial of handgun purchases and assuring conviction of persons charged with prohibiting offenses when supported by the facts. Finally, the results could be used to encourage law enforcement agencies to develop programs to retrieve firearms from people who have fallen into a prohibited category and continue to possess firearms.

Citation: Wright, Mona, Wintemute, Garen, "Felonious or Violent Criminal Activity That Prohibits Gun Ownership Among Prior Purchasers of Handguns: Incidence and Risk Factors," *Journal of Trauma*, online release, May 2010

Title: Surveillance for Violent Deaths - National Violent Death Reporting System, 16 States, 2007

Brady URL: <http://www.bradycampaign.org/studies/view/180/>

Publication Date: May 14, 2010

What does it say? Nineteen states now participate in the National Violent Death Reporting System, which collects information from death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, and police reports. The states are Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin. California participates but not yet statewide. This report analyzes data from the 16 states that participated statewide in 2007 (i. e., no data from California, Ohio, or Michigan).

Homicides

Sixty-six percent of all murders are committed with guns. The location of homicides (all methods) varies by gender: 73 percent of female murder victims are killed in the home, while 45 percent of men are killed in the home. Twenty-six percent of men are killed on the street.

For homicides for which data were available (65 percent), almost 40 percent of homicides were related to an argument or conflict not related to money or property, one third were precipitated by another crime, and 20 percent were domestic violence related (note: more than one reason can apply to the same incident). Of the homicides precipitated by another crime, in most cases the crime was in progress at the time of the incident. Thirty-seven percent were precipitated by a robbery; 23 percent by an assault.

Suicides

Fifty-one percent of suicides were committed with firearms. Seventy-seven percent of suicides (all methods) occurred in a house or apartment. One third of suicide victims had a crisis in the previous two weeks.

The highest rates of suicide by age group occurred among persons aged 45 to 54 years. Historically, elderly adults have had the highest suicide rates.

Suicide of Former or Current Military Personnel

Former or current military personnel are more likely to use a firearm to kill themselves (67 percent) than the general public (51 percent).

Unintentional Shooting Deaths

Most unintentional shooting deaths occurred in November (18 percent), and most occurred in a house or apartment (65 percent). The most common context of the death was playing with the gun (30 percent), followed by hunting (25 percent). Twenty-six percent thought the gun was unloaded, and 20 percent unintentionally pulled the trigger.

Legal Intervention

Of the 145 legal intervention deaths (a death in which a law enforcement officer lawfully kills a citizen), most (46 percent) were non-Hispanic whites and 35 percent were non-Hispanic blacks. Thirty-eight percent occurred in a home, while 32 percent occurred on the street.

Homicides Followed by Suicides

Eighty percent of homicides followed by suicides were committed with guns. Women made up the majority of the homicide victims (73 percent), while men were the shooters/suicides (93

percent). Most (75 percent) happened in a house or apartment. In terms of stressors, 91 percent of shooters/suicides had experienced a crisis during the previous 2 weeks.

How can I use it? Relationship problems, interpersonal conflicts, mental-health problems, and recent crises are among the primary precipitating factors of violent deaths. Access to firearms increases the lethality of these violent interactions, making it more likely that someone will die. States with NVDRS can use the data to focus legislative solutions such as background checks for every gun sale, childproof guns, and child access prevention laws, to save lives. Advocates can access data from the participating states via a query tool at:

<http://wisqars.cdc.gov:8080/nvdrs/nvdrsDisplay.jsp>

Citation: Karch, Debra; Dahlberg, Linda; Patel, Nimesh, "Surveillance for Violent Deaths - National Violent Death Reporting System, 16 States, 2007," *MMWR*, 59(SS-4) May 14, 2010: 1-50

Title: Variation in Pediatric and Adolescent Firearm Mortality Rates in Rural and Urban U.S. Counties

Brady URL: <http://www.bradycampaign.org/studies/view/181/>

Publication Date: June 2010

What Does It Say? Children and teens (0 to 19) in the most rural counties of the country are as likely to die from a gunshot as those living in the most urban counties. Rural kids have more gun suicides and unintentional shooting deaths, while urban kids die more often of gun homicides.

This finding is consistent with an earlier study finding a similar pattern among people of all ages (see: <http://www.bradycampaign.org/studies/view/120/>).

How Can I Use It? Use the results of this study to educate lawmakers that gun violence is a problem that affects children all across the U.S., not just those living in urban areas. Legislative solutions such as background checks for every gun sale, including those at gun shows, childproof handguns, and child access prevention laws are needed to address gun violence among youth in the U.S.

Citation: Nance, Michael L., et al, "Variation in Pediatric and Adolescent Firearm Mortality Rates in Rural and Urban U.S. Counties," *Pediatrics* 125(6) June 2010: 1112-1118

Title: Minutes from the Inter-Parliamentary Seminar on Parliamentary Action on Small Arms - The Illicit Transfer of Small Arms to Latin America

Not online: email Becca for a copy

Publication Date: April 2010

What Does It Say? In April, an international network of elected officials, the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PFSALW), convened a seminar on Capitol Hill to share information on gun trafficking to Latin America. Sam Logan, a consultant on international drug trafficking, affirmed the role of U.S. gun shows, corrupt dealers, and the sunset of the assault weapons ban in increases in gun trafficking not only to Mexico but to all of Latin America.

Logan shared findings from a Mexico National Defense Commission report indicating that seizures of assault weapons have increased in the past few years. One of the problems associated with interdicting the flow of guns at the border is that guns are trafficked in small amounts, making it difficult to catch traffickers. This is known as “ant” trafficking.

The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons dates to the early 1990s when the proliferation of guns and other small arms hindered rebuilding efforts after Hurricane Mitch in Central America. Spanish and Swedish legislators aided Central American legislators in coping with the problem and subsequently established the network. The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons now has 200 members in 60 countries.

A member of parliament from Brazil expressed concern that there were only 2 members of Congress at the seminar. Cindy Buhl, the Legislative Director for Representative James McGovern (D-MA) explained that relationship building with U.S. Senators, Representatives and their staffers is the way forward to put the issue of arms proliferation in Latin America on the Congressional agenda. The ambassador from the Organization of American States mentioned that mayors in the U.S. seemed more open to push for stricter gun laws than members of the U.S. Congress.

How Can I Use It? The minutes from this meeting provide background on how gun trafficking from the U.S. to Latin America is being framed and understood by elected officials from other countries.

Citation: Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms, *Minutes from the Inter-Parliamentary Seminar on “Parliamentary Action on Small Arms - The Illicit Transfer of Small Arms to Latin America,”* Washington, DC, April 27, 2010

Title: Application of a Firearm Seizure Law Aimed at Dangerous Persons: Outcomes from the First Two Years

URL: <http://psychservices.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/abstract/61/5/478>

Publication Date: May 2010

What Does It Say? Indiana is one of two states with a law allowing police to seize firearms from people believed to be imminently dangerous (Connecticut is the other state, see: <http://www.bradycampaign.org/studies/view/23>). Indiana adopted its law in 2005. This study reviews the use of the law in 2006 and 2007.

In Indiana, the court reviews seizures within 14 days of the incident and must prove its case for retention by clear and convincing evidence.

Over the 2-year period, the law was used in 133 incidents. The mean number of firearms seized was 2-3. In some incidents, the number of guns seized was as high as 25. The most common reasons for firearm seizure were risk of suicide, substance abuse, risk of violence, domestic disturbance, and psychosis.

In 2006, the court retained the weapons in 53 percent of the cases. In 42 percent of the cases, the gun owners voluntarily gave up their weapons. In 80 percent of the cases, the owner either agreed to surrender his or her CCW permit or lost it by court order.

By contrast, in 2007, only 8 percent of guns were retained after the court hearing and only 14 percent were retained because of voluntary surrender. However, in more than two-thirds of the cases, the person could not be found or did not appear in court, so the hearing was postponed and the guns were retained. Licenses to carry concealed were revoked for only 10 percent of the cases in 2007. The reason for the change from 2006 to 2007 could not be discerned from available data.

How Can I Use It? Over a 2-year period, Indiana police have used the firearm seizure law an average of 4 times a month to hold 360 firearms in the possession of people considered to be imminently dangerous. These seizures appear to be both appropriate and likely to protect the public and the police. Use the results of this study to advocate for states to allow police to seize firearms from people believed to be imminently dangerous.

Citation: Parker, George F, "Application of a Firearm Seizure Law Aimed at Dangerous Persons: Outcomes from the First Two Years," *Psychiatric Services* May 2010 61(5): 478-482

Title: Characteristics of Elderly and Other Vulnerable Adult Victims of Homicide by a Caregiver: National Violent Death Reporting System - 17 U.S. States, 2003-2007

URL: <http://jiv.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/0886260510362890v1>

Publication Date: May 2010

What does it say? This article demonstrates the power of the National Violent Death Reporting System to provide detail previously unavailable that is useful for designing interventions and policies to prevent gun deaths and injuries. Examples of information not previously available include: whether or not there was a history of abuse in the victim-suspect relationship and narratives from the incidents.

Most of the homicides perpetrated by a caregiver (44 percent; 30/68) were homicides followed by suicides. Of the homicide/suicides, 67 percent were committed with a firearm, and 73 percent of the perpetrators were husbands or sons.

The incident narratives provide anecdotal information that helps to identify potential intervention points. For example, in one homicide/suicide, a 64-year-old father shot his 40-year-old quadriplegic son and then himself. The father had just been diagnosed with emphysema and felt he could no longer take care of his son.

How can I use it? Advocates can use the data and incident narratives available in the National Violent Death Reporting System to make real to elected officials the tragic role that firearms play in violent death in the U.S. - in all age groups and contexts.

Citation: Karch, Debra, and Kelly Cole Nunn, "Characteristics of Elderly and Other Vulnerable Adult Victims of Homicide by a Caregiver: National Violent Death Reporting System - 17 U.S. States, 2003-2007," *J Interpers Violence*, online first, May 2010

Title: When Is An Injustice Compelling Enough to Act? Mobilization Within the Gun Violence Prevention Movement

Not online: email Becca for a copy

Publication Date: Spring 2010

What Does It Say? A student at Carleton College queried a convenience sample of 39 gun control activists to find out why and how they became involved in the movement and what they thought was the most effective way to get others involved. Results varied by gender.

Among women (54 percent of respondents), 90 percent cited moral shocks as their primary reason for beginning to work on gun violence prevention, followed by "other involvement" at 10 percent.

Moral shocks included having known a victim, research and statistics on gun violence, a gun violence event, or other type of moral shock.

By contrast, the reasons of becoming involved were more dispersed among men. Less than half of men (44 percent) cited more moral shocks as their primary motivator, followed by networks (22 percent), other involvement (17 percent) and job openings (17 percent).

Of women respondents, 71 percent were unpaid volunteers and 33 percent received some pay (full- or part-time). Among men, 29 percent were unpaid volunteers and 67 percent were paid (it was unclear if this was full- or part-time).

In terms of motivating new activists to join the movement, most respondents saw moral shocks as the most effective strategy (71 percent). Roughly a third thought social networks were most effective.

Most of the activists had previous experience with activism or community involvement (79 percent) and the moral shock or social network connection appeared to have directed their energy to the gun violence prevention movement.

How Can I Use It? To attract new volunteer leaders to the movement, organizational leaders may want to consider two main strategies: 1) crafting messages, facts and events to connect people directly to the moral shock of gun violence, and 2) delivering those messages via social networks of people already working in activism or community involvement. Another strategy might be to build coalitions with victim groups.

Citation: Aufderheide, Ruth, *When Is An Injustice Compelling Enough to Act? Mobilization With the Gun Violence Prevention Movement*, Student Paper, Carleton College, Spring 2010

Research Resources

- Gunpolicy.org has added an international knowledge database to its website. The website provides statistical and legislative information by country. Check it out at: <http://www.gunpolicy.org/>.
- The United Nations Biennial Meeting of States on small arms (BMS) just wrapped up in New York City. You can watch statements made by international non-profits at the UN BMS here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheIANSA> or read about the meeting here: <http://www.iansa.org/>.

Upcoming Research/Research in Progress

- Crime gun trace data for 2009 was recently released on ATF's website. The new data is available here: <http://www.atf.gov/statistics/trace-data/2009-trace-data.html>. The Brady Center analyzed the data and released a statement, see: <http://www.bradycampaign.org/media/press/view/1257/>.
- Gun death data for 2007 was released May 27 and can be accessed here: http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate10_sy.html. The Violence Policy Center analyzed the data and put out a release, see: <http://www.vpc.org/press/1006gundeath.htm>.
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics usually releases updated Brady denial numbers in August, and the FBI usually releases updated crime data in September. The most recent gun data available as of June 21, 2010 is: CDC deaths - 2007; CDC injuries - 2008; FBI police reports (final data) - 2008.

Opposition Research

The third edition of John Lott's book, *More Guns, Less Crime* has been released, and Lott is making presentations on the book. The Brady Campaign's Paul Helmke debated him at the Cato Institute June 17th. Based on Lott's presentation at the Cato Institute, he is focusing on four main points (in addition to the title of the book) that we will need to be prepared to rebut:

- 1) CCW permit holders are extremely law-abiding;
- 2) The number of anecdotal news stories of defensive gun uses "dwarfs any possible bad actions by permit holders with their concealed handguns;" (p. 336)
- 3) No refereed academic articles by economists or criminologists claim that right-to-carry laws have a significant bad effect on crime rates (p. 336);
- 4) No place that has adopted a gun ban has seen murder rates go down.