



Americans Against Gun Violence
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*Is gun violence a serious problem in the United States of America? **Yes, definitely.***

Gun violence is a very serious public health problem in the United States.

The US gun violence problem typically receives the greatest public attention following high profile mass shootings such as the December 14, 2012 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, in which 20 children and six adults were killed or the Pulse nightclub mass shooting in Orlando, Florida, on June 12, 2016, in which 49 people were killed and 53 wounded. As tragic as such mass shootings are, they are only the tip of a much larger epidemic of firearm-related deaths and injuries in our country. On an average day in the United States, more than 90 U.S. civilians, including five youth age 18 or under, are killed by guns.¹ It's estimated that there are at least two to three times this many non-fatal gunshot wounds every day in our country.^{2,3}

Rates of firearm related deaths in the United States rank high in comparison with other serious public health problems. Every year, more than 30,000 people are killed by guns in our country. By comparison, there were approximately 3,000 deaths due to polio in the entire United States at the height of the polio epidemic in 1952. The current rate of firearm-related deaths in the U.S. is more than double the rate of deaths due to AIDS.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** By 1991, the annual number of firearms related deaths exceeded the number of deaths due to motor vehicle accidents in seven states.⁴ Overall, gunshot wounds are the 4th leading cause of years of preventable loss of life below age 65 in our country.⁵ Firearms related deaths and injuries are also rampant in adolescents and young adults.^{6,7,8,9,10} Gunshot wounds are the second leading cause of death for children ages 10-19 in the United States, with only motor vehicle accidents taking a higher toll.¹¹

It's estimated that the annual cost of medical treatment of gunshot victims in the United States is \$2.3-4 billion.^{12,13} The overall cost to society of firearm-related injuries in the United States has been estimated to be over \$100 billion annually.¹⁴

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention WISQARS database. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/default.htm>. Accessed January 7, 2013.

² Nonfatal and fatal firearm-related injuries – United States, 1993-1997. MMWR 1999;48:1029-1034.

³ Annet JL, Mercy JA, Gibson DR, Ryan GW. National estimates of nonfatal firearm-related injuries. JAMA 1995;273:1749-1754.

⁴ Deaths resulting from firearm- and motor-vehicle-related injuries – United States 1968-1991. MMWR 1994;43:37-42.

⁵ Firearm-Related Years of Potential Life Lost Before Age 65 Years - United States, 1980-1991. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. August 26, 1994 / Vol. 43 / No. 33, pp. 609-611.

⁶ Ropp, L, Visintainer P, Uman J, Treloqr D. Death in the city. An American childhood tragedy. JAMA 1992;267:2905-2910.

⁷ Christoffel KK, Christoffel T. Handguns as a pediatric problem. *Pediatric Emergency Care* 1986; 2:75-81.

⁸ Ordog G, Wasserberger J, Schatz I, et al. Gunshot wounds in children under 10 years of age. A new epidemic. *AJDC* 142:1988:618-622.

⁹ Firearm-related injuries affecting the pediatric population. Committee on Injury and Poison Prevention. American Academy of Pediatrics. *Pediatrics* 2000;105:888-895.

¹⁰ Shahpar C, Li G. Homicide mortality in the United States, 1935-1994: age, period, and cohort effects. *Am J Epidemiol* 1999;150:1213-1222.

¹¹ Fingerhut LA, Christoffel KK. Firearm-Related Death and Injury Among Children and Adolescents, pp. 25-38 in *The Future of Children*, Volume 12, Number 2. Published by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

¹² Cook PJ, Lawrence BA, Ludwig J, Miller TR. The medical costs of gunshot injuries in the United States. *JAMA* 1999;282:447-454.

¹³ Kizer KW, Vassar MJ, Harry RL, Layton KD. Hospitalization charges, costs, and income for firearm-related injuries at a university trauma center. *JAMA* 1995;273:1768-1773.

¹⁴ Miller TR, Cohen MA. Costs. In: *Injury RR, Cayten CC, eds. Textbook of Penetrating Trauma*. Baltimore, Willims and Wilkins; 1996:49-59.