

Study finds most unintentional firearm injuries among children occurred in homes of victims

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A study of accidental firearm injuries in children found that the shootings most often occurred in the homes of the patient, friends, or family members, and that in most instances, one child unintentionally shot another or a child shot themselves.

"Retrospective Analysis of Unintentional Firearm Injuries in Children Presenting to a Pediatric Emergency Department," conducted through the Pediatric Research Program at Fort Worth and Cook Children's Health Care System, analyzed accidental firearm injuries in pediatric patients under 19 years old at the Cook Children's Emergency Department in Fort Worth, Texas. The aim of the study was to identify trends and potential factors that place [children](#) at higher risk for unintentional firearm injuries. The researchers compared the outcomes and differences between powder guns (shotguns, rifles, handguns) and air-power guns (BB guns, pellet guns, air soft guns and nerf guns).

The study was conducted using medical records at Cook Children's Health Care Center from January 2015 to June 2021. A total of 204 patients met the inclusion criteria. Cases in which the intention could not be determined or the shooting was deemed intentional or it was a suicide attempt were excluded from the study. The researchers recorded data on the type of gun, location and scenario of the shooting, and the location of the [injury](#).

The study found that 29% of the [firearm](#) injuries occurred with powder guns and 71% with air-powder guns, with BB guns causing the most injuries. Most of the injuries were due to guns that may not seem dangerous, such as BB guns, but can cause serious injuries and death.

The study also found that the shootings most commonly occurred in the homes of the patient (76%), friends, or family members and that most of the time the accident occurred when one child accidentally shot another, or the child shot themselves.

Dr. Daniel D Guzman from Cook Children's in Fort Worth, who led the study, said: "Firearm storage and supervision are key factors in reducing the number of unintentional gun injuries in our youth, given many of these injuries occur in the home. It is important that all firearms,

powdered and air-powered, be stored safely in a lock box or safe. Our Aim for Safety program was developed at Cook Children's Health Care System in Fort Worth, Texas. This research provides targeted education to school-aged children and parents about the dangers of unsupervised play with BB/pellet guns, as well as the importance of storing all firearms in the home unloaded and in a locked safe."

The authors also recommend that parents have conversations with the parents of their children's friends to find out if they have guns in their homes and how they are stored.

Firearm injury is one of the leading causes of death in children and adolescents, with about 1,300 children dying annually from gun-related injuries. It is estimated that there are more than 22 million children living in homes with guns. Children are at a higher risk for unintentional death or injury because of their natural curiosity. Research also has indicated that the main danger to children does not come from accidental injury by adults, but from the accessibility of firearms to children, their siblings, and friends, the study notes.

More information: Retrospective Analysis of Unintentional Firearm Injuries in Children Presenting to a Pediatric Emergency Department, 2022 American Academy of Pediatrics National Conference & Exhibition

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