

Internists favor public policy to reduce gun violence

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(HealthDay)—Most internists believe that firearm-related violence is a public health issue and favor policy initiatives aimed at reducing it, according to research published online April 10 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Renee Butkus and Arlene Weissman, Ph.D., from the American College of Physicians in Washington, D.C., conducted a survey of 573 internists (response rate, 56.5 percent) regarding experiences, practice behaviors, and opinions related to firearms and related public policies. Physician education and training in firearm safety were also assessed.

The researchers found that 85 percent of participants believed that firearm injury is a public health issue, and 71 percent believed that it is a bigger problem today than a decade ago. More than three-quarters of [respondents](#) (76 percent) believed that stricter gun control legislation

would help reduce the risks for gun-related injuries or deaths. More than half of respondents (58 percent) reported never asking whether patients have guns in their homes. Two-thirds of respondents believed that physicians should have the right to counsel patients on preventing deaths and injuries from firearms.

"Although most [internists](#) supported a physician's right to counsel patients about gun safety, few reported currently doing it," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)

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[Policy Statement](#)

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