

Firearms, Police and Public Health



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Outline

1. US Exceptionalism—Gun Violence
 - Population Homicide
 - Killings of Police
 - Killings by Police
2. Surveys
 - Of Police: Discretion (concealed carry)
 - Of Adults on Police Performance
 - Of Adolescents on Police Performance
3. Community Collaboration
 - Boston Bicycle Report
 - Operation Lipstick
4. Collaboration with the Gun Community
 - Means Matter Campaign

US Exceptionalism

Population Homicide: Among high-income countries, firearm death is a uniquely American problem



U.S. vs. Other First World Countries (Similarities)

Similar Crime

Similar Violence

Similar Bullying rates

Similar Aggression/Depression rates
among school children

How are we different? Easy Access to Guns



U.S. vs. Other First World Countries

Differences

- More private guns

Handguns

+ Permissive gun laws

= More gun homicides

= **MORE HOMICIDES**

Death

International Analyses

Homicide, Suicide, and Unintentional Gun Deaths among **5-14** year olds:
The United States vs. the Other High Income Populous Countries, 2010

	Mortality Rate Ratio
Homicides	
Gun homicides	18.5
Non-gun homicides	1.4
Total	3.4
Suicides	
Gun Suicides	11.2
Non-gun Suicides	1.1
Total	1.5
Unintentional firearm deaths	12.2
Total firearm deaths	14.2

Source: Grinshetyn & Hemenway AJM 2015

Homicide, Suicide & Unintentional Gun Deaths **15-24** year olds US vs. other High-Income Populous Countries

	Mortality Rate Ratio (vs. all males in other countries)	
	White Males	Black Male
Homicides		
Gun Homicides	21	192
Non-Gun Homicides	2	9
TOTAL	8	65
Suicides		
Gun Suicides	9	8
Non-Gun Suicides	0.7	0.4
TOTAL	1.4	1.0
Unintentional Firearm Deaths	8	15

Killings of Police



2008-2012

Number of American Police Killed = 265

Number of German Police Killed = 2

More than 30X the rate

Are Police More Likely to be Killed in
Some States? Why?

Killings of Police # Killed (1996-2010)



	High Gun States	Low Gun States
Household Gun Ownership	52%	14%
LEOs 1996-2010	2.7m	2.7m
Homicide Deaths	263	85
Homicide Rate per 100,000 LEO	9.5	3.1
		Swedler et al AJPH 2015

Killings by Police



US vs. Germany
40 times the rate

Zimring 2016

Legal Intervention Homicides 16 NVDRS States, 2005-2012

	Supplementary Homicide Reports	Vital Statistics	NVDRS
Total	742 victims	906 victims	1,552 victims
Examples			
Georgia	92	108	228
North Carolina	43	33	166
Colorado	60	77	119
Oregon	29	94	91
Massachusetts	6	36	46
			Barber et al AJP 2016

Surveys



Surveys of Police:

Use of Police Discretion for Gun Carrying Permits in a May-Issue State

Poll of MA police chiefs

	Want to keep police chief discretion for issuing permits ? (N= 121)
Definitely Yes	76%
Yes	13%
Neutral	2%
No	2%
Definitely No	7%

Hemenway & Hicks
JPHP 2015

Reasons for Permit Denial

- “Long history of alcohol abuse and domestic calls to the home”
- “Arrested for DUI and fought with officers”
- “Applicant asked son to help him commit suicide”
- “Said he was going to take his guns and go to one of my officer’s homes and shoot him in the head”

Surveys of Youth Boston Data Project

- Fear
- Witnessing
- Victimization
- Perpetration

- Sibling Violence
- Peer Violence
- Dating Violence



Fear

	% Feel Unsafe*
Home	
School	
To/from school	
On your street	
Neighborhood	
Public Transportation	

*rarely/never feel safe

Fear

2006

	% Feel Unsafe*
Home	3
School	10
To/from school	16
On your street	19
Neighborhood	21
Public Transportation	30



*rarely/never feel safe

Adult Views of Police in Boston

- Police doing a good job 84%



Adolescent Views of Boston Police

How Much Do You Trust Police in Your Neighborhood?

Not at all	26%
Only a little	27%
Some	34%
A lot	13%



Community Collaboration

Boston Bicycle Report



Bicycle Report

- Helped Reduce Bike Accidents
- Changed Relationship between Bike Advocates and Police



Citizens for Safety

- “Where Did the Gun Come From”
- Operation Lipstick-women as straw purchasers



“Operation Lipstick”



Public Health Collaboration with the Gun Community: Suicide Prevention



Without changing any laws,
Without changing anyone's mental health

Working with gun advocates to reduce suicide

- Gun Shop Project
- Gun Trainers

**CONCERNED ABOUT
A FAMILY MEMBER
OR FRIEND?**

ARE THEY SUICIDAL?

- Depressed, angry, impulsive?
- Going through a relationship break-up, legal trouble, or other setback?
- Using drugs or alcohol more?
- Withdrawing from things they used to enjoy?
- Talking about being better off dead?
- Losing hope?
- Acting reckless?
- Feeling trapped?

SUICIDES IN NH
far outnumber homicides

**FIREARMS ARE THE
LEADING METHOD**

**ATTEMPTS WITH A GUN
ARE MORE DEADLY**
than attempts with other methods



“We hope you will join us in a new effort to prevent suicide in Maryland. Our goals include: 1) informing firearm retailers and ranges about suicide so you and your staff can be alert for signs that a customer may be seeking a firearm for that purpose; 2) educating all customers that if someone they know is at risk of suicide they should act to reduce their access to firearms”

Lots of successes in injury/violence Prevention

