

Report shows gun deaths among U.S. children rose 87% over past 10 year



A little girl holds up a sign that reads "Protect Kids, Not Guns" during a rally in Newtown, Connecticut. (Photo: Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

Washington, October 7 (RHC)-- In the U.S., as Republican lawmakers and the gun lobby have fought tooth and nail against proposals to reduce access to firearms in the U.S. and ensure they are kept out of the hands of children over the last decade, the number of child deaths from gun violence has almost doubled, rising 87% between 2011-21.

Two doctors in the Division of Emergency Medicine at Boston Children's Hospital were joined by the teenage daughter of one of the physicians in analyzing nonfatal and fatal injuries over a decade and published the study Thursday in the journal *Pediatrics*, run by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

The researchers found that nonfatal injuries from all causes, such as car crashes and household accidents, dropped by more than half between 2011-21, plummeting from 11,592 to 5,359 per 100,000 children. The rate of fatal injuries went up from 14.07 to 17.3 per 100,000.

"Firearms and drug poisonings are both exceptions to this, in that both the nonfatal injuries and the fatal injuries increased," Cordelia Mannix, a high school student in Concord, Massachusetts and the daughter of lead study author Dr. Rebekah Mannix, told The New York Times.

Just over 1,300 children under the age of 18 were killed by firearms in 2011, compared with 2,590 children in 2021.

The study comes a year after data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed that guns had overtaken car accidents as the leading killer of U.S. children.

In other wealthy countries, noted the Times, gun violence is not even within the top three causes of death among children. The researchers wrote regarding both firearm injuries and deaths and those resulting from drug poisonings that "public health legislative support has lagged in these critical injury mechanisms." "This is especially concerning given the high case fatality rate of these injury mechanisms in children," they wrote.

Dr. Mannix attributed reduced injuries and deaths from other causes to "public health interventions," telling ABC News that the U.S. in recent decades has been "improving motor vehicle safety, improving helmet technology, [and] childproofing."

The firearm industry in the last decade has lobbied against red flag laws aimed at keeping guns out of the hands of people at risk of harming themselves or others, universal background checks, and bans on the types of guns that have been increasingly used in mass shootings, such as AR-15s.

Mark Oliva, a spokesperson for the National Shooting Sports Foundation, told the Times that the group also opposes laws requiring manufacturers to make guns childproof and that "the group is not currently doing research on making firearms safer," despite rising deaths among children.

Meanwhile, said Kenneth Roth, former executive director of Human Rights Watch, Republican lawmakers "somehow maintain that their gun culture makes people safer."

Earlier this week, data from the Gun Violence Archive showed that more than 1,300 children and teenagers have been killed by a firearm so far this year, while the CDC found in April that gun deaths among children rose 50% in just two years, between 2019-21.

Students Demand Action, a youth-led gun control advocacy group, said Tuesday that U.S. children are "paying the price for inaction on gun violence with our lives."

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