

U.S. gun deaths near three-decade high with female fatalities rising faster

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The file photo shows a collection of illegal weapons from a gun buyback event in Brooklyn, New York, the United States. (Photo> AP)

New York, December 2 (RHC)-- The rate of gun deaths in the United States last year hit its highest mark in nearly three decades, with female fatalities growing faster than that of men, a new study has revealed. The results of a newly-conducted research published by JAMA Network Open showed on Tuesday the rise of fatalities due to the use of firearms among women, not least Black women, is playing a tragic and under-recognized part in the tally.

"Women can get lost in the discussion because so many of the fatalities are men," said Eric Fleegler of Harvard Medical School, who co-authored the paper titled "Trends and Disparities in Firearm Fatalities in the United States, 1990-2021" published by JAMA Network Open.

He said the research, which is considered to be one of the most comprehensive analyses of US gun deaths in years, showed the rate of gun-related homicides among Black women more than tripled since 2010, and that the rate of gun-related suicides more than doubled since 2015.

Back in October, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued data on US firearm deaths in 2021, counting more than 47,000, the most in at least four decades.

The rate of deaths caused by firearms is becoming worse as the population of the US goes up, the researchers said, adding the country's gun-related homicide and suicide rates both hiked to eight percent last year, a record rise for both since the early 1990s.

In the current study, the researchers examined trends in firearm deaths since 1990, finding that gun-related deaths began to steadily rise in 2005, but the increase accelerated recently, with a 20 percent hike from 2019 to 2021.

There have been a total of 609 mass shootings in 2022 in the United States so far, putting the country on pace to reach around 675 by the end of the year. The study counted more than 1,110,420 gun-related deaths in the course of 32 years, about the same as the number of American deaths caused by COVID-19 pandemic in the past three years.

Of these deaths, more than 952,980 were among males (85.8 percent) and over 157,160 among females (14.2 percent). According to the paper, there were about seven gun deaths per 100,000 women last year, up from about four per 100,000 in 2010, showing an increase of 71 percent. The comparable rise for men was 45 percent, the rate increasing to around 26 per 100,000 from around 18 per 100,000 in 2010.

The researchers said young black men still hold the highest homicide gun death rates, at 142 per 100,000 for those in their early 20s. The highest gun suicide death rates are in white men in their early 80s, at 45 per 100,000.

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