

Homicide Deaths in Relation to Household Gun Ownership Rates

Gun Death 5 Slide Series, Volume 3

July 29, 2024

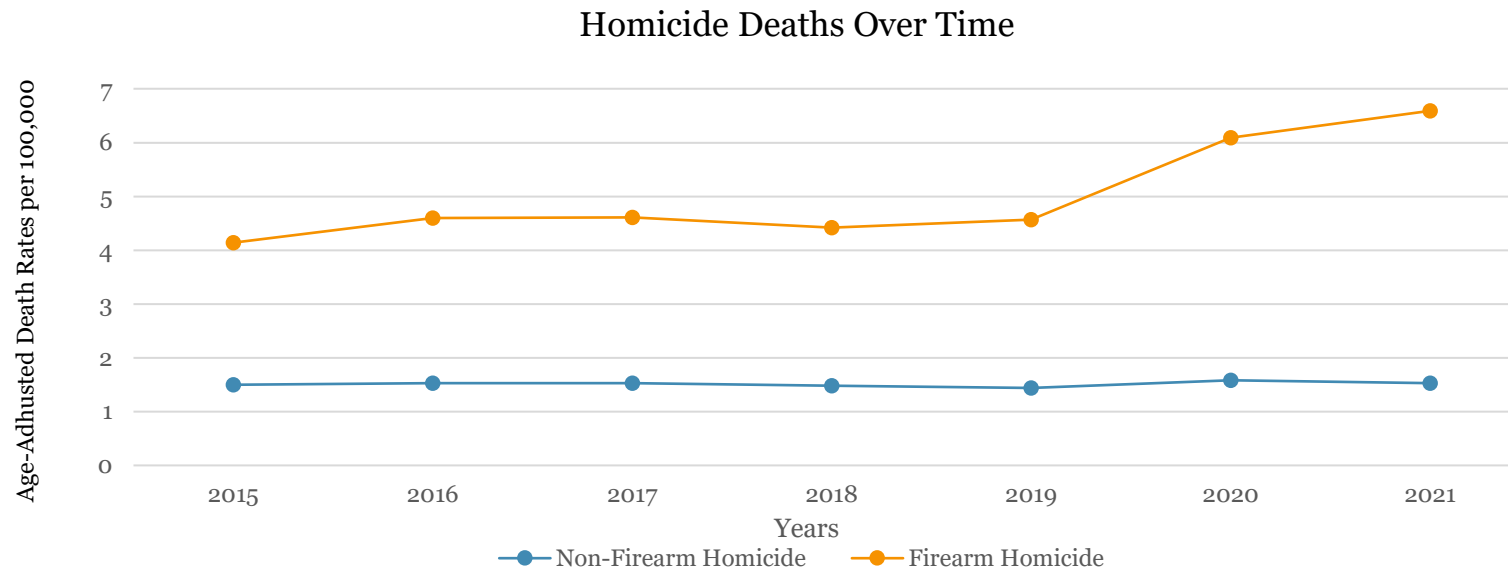
The Menges Group

Strategic Health Policy & Care Coordination Consulting

Introduction

- The previous (second) edition of our Gun Death 5 Slide Series demonstrated the strong correlation between gun household rates and suicide rates.
- This edition demonstrates that similar dynamics have occurred with homicides. The more gun households in a community, the greater the homicide rate.
- During 2021, 25,808 lives were lost due to homicide, 22,795 of which (88%) were gun deaths. The average age of these homicides, 34, is **42 years** below our country's average life expectancy (76).

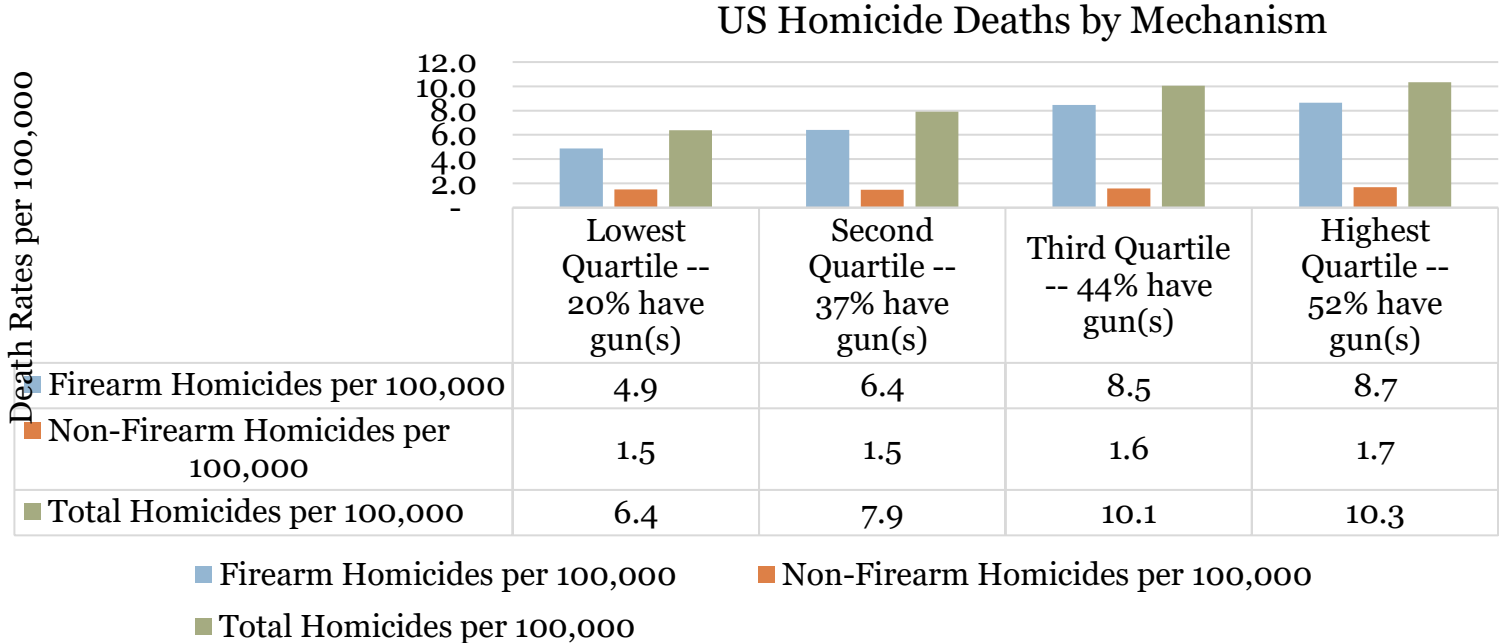
Homicides Have Increased Dramatically in Recent Years, Driven by Firearm Killings



Homicides in the USA increased by 36% between 2019 and 2021.

- While firearm homicides increased by 45% from 2019 to 2021, non-firearm homicides increased by “only” 7%. Overall, there were 6,829 more homicides in 2021 than in 2019, and 6,493 of these additional homicides (95.1%) occurred via firearm.

Household Gun Ownership is Directly Correlated with Homicide Rates



The firearm homicide rate is **78% higher** in the quartile of states with the highest percentage of gun households – relative to the quartile with the lowest percentage of gun households.

The [psychology of household gun ownership](#) seems focused on having a strong defense against a potential evil invader.

However, these data strongly refute having a gun being a choice that, on average, creates personal safety. At the community level, these decisions appear to have caused far more homicides to occur.

Non-firearm homicide rates do not vary meaningfully across state groups. Gun homicides explain the full differences in overall homicide rates.

Others' Research Findings Demonstrate in Detail the Dangers of Household Gun Ownership

- [Research at Stanford University](#), excerpted below from a Times Magazine article had the following key findings:
 - “People living with handgun owners died by homicide at twice the rate of their neighbors in gun-free homes. That difference was driven largely by homicides at home, which were three times more common among people living with handgun owners.”
 - “...people living with handgun owners were seven times more likely to be shot by their spouse or intimate partner.” and “...the vast majority of victims in these intimate partner shootings—84% in all—were female.”
- Multiple studies show that less than 25% of homicides occur in the victim's home.
 - ["Gun Ownership as a Risk Factor for Homicide in the Home"](#)
 - ["A profile of homicides on the streets and in the homes of New York City"](#)
- Conversely, roughly 75% of suicides occur in the victim's home – **and suicide represents by far the greatest in-one's-home gun death risk (relative to homicide)**. Gun access is incredibly well-correlated with suicide rates -- as shown both in our prior Series edition (Volume 2) and in greater detail via [others' research](#).

A Cascade of Household Safety Evidence Is Compellingly in Favor of Not Owning a Gun

- Homicide death rates are directly correlated with household gun ownership rates.
- Most homicides occur at a location other than at the victim's home.
- Even when focusing on homicides that occur inside the victim's home, the chances of dying via homicide are far higher in a gun household than in a non-gun household.
- Worst of all, a gun in the home significantly exacerbates the risk of death via suicide. The volume of in-home gun suicides far exceeds the volume of in-home gun homicides.

Upcoming Editions of Our Gun Death Series

- The next editions of our Series focus on the following topics:
 - What opportunities exist to help families make a more data-driven – and less belief-driven -- decision about bringing a gun into their homes?
 - The USA is clearly not going to take away the right to gun ownership. However, citizens can also choose to not own a gun. Our data tabulations indicate that more households making a “no gun” decision will save lives within these families (and in their broader communities) – via reduced homicides and especially via reduced suicides.
 - Are there analogous lessons from cigarettes? All adults have the choice to smoke or not, and smoking rates have dropped considerably across the past several decades.
 - How can objective gun ownership education (and suicide prevention education) get more into the “jet stream” of the nation’s evolving focus on population health?
 - What are the health equity data dynamics related to homicides and suicides, and the role of firearms in these disparities?
 - We will also present a summary/bibliography of others’ work in this important area.

5 Slide Series Overview

Our 5 Slide Series is typically a monthly publication whereby we briefly discuss/address a selected topic outside the confines of our client engagements. The Menges Group has developed a variety of datasets that we use to support our 5 Slide Series and client projects.

To be added to our list to receive these as they are published (or to be removed), please email us at pcall@themengesgroup.com. If you have questions about the content or data sources we have available, please email us at jmenges@themengesgroup.com or call 571-312-2360.

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