

Suicide Deaths in Relation to Household Gun Ownership Rates

Gun Death 5 Slide Series, Volume 2

July 22, 2024

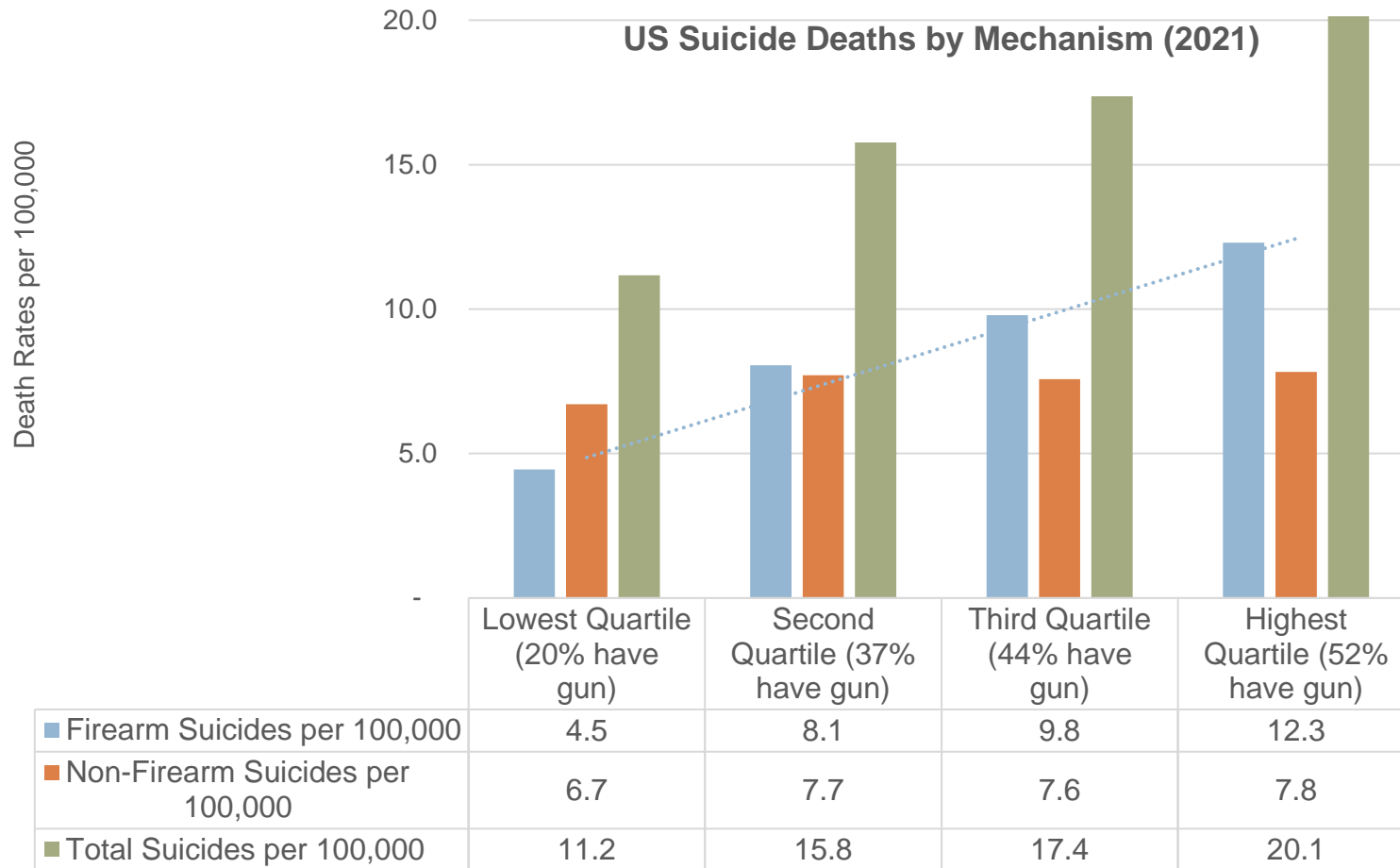
The Menges Group

Strategic Health Policy & Care Coordination Consulting

Introduction

- The prior (initial) edition of our Gun Death 5 Slide Series emphasized the devastating volume of suicides in the USA.
 - In 2022, 49,432 lives were lost in the United States via suicide.
 - The average age of these suicides, 47, is 29 years below our country's average life expectancy (76 years).
- This edition demonstrates that considerable variation exists between states regarding suicide death rates, and that this death rate variation is highly correlated with each state's percentage of households that have one or more guns.

The Percentage of Households With Guns is Strongly Correlated with Suicide Rates



We anticipated that the non-firearm death rates (shown in the orange bars) would offset more of the firearm death stark differential (shown in the blue bars), on the presumption that sufficiently despondent persons without access to a gun would still complete suicide -- but do so in a different way.

This does not appear to be the case in terms of explaining suicide rate differentials. Non-firearm suicide rates were highly similar across the state groups assessed.

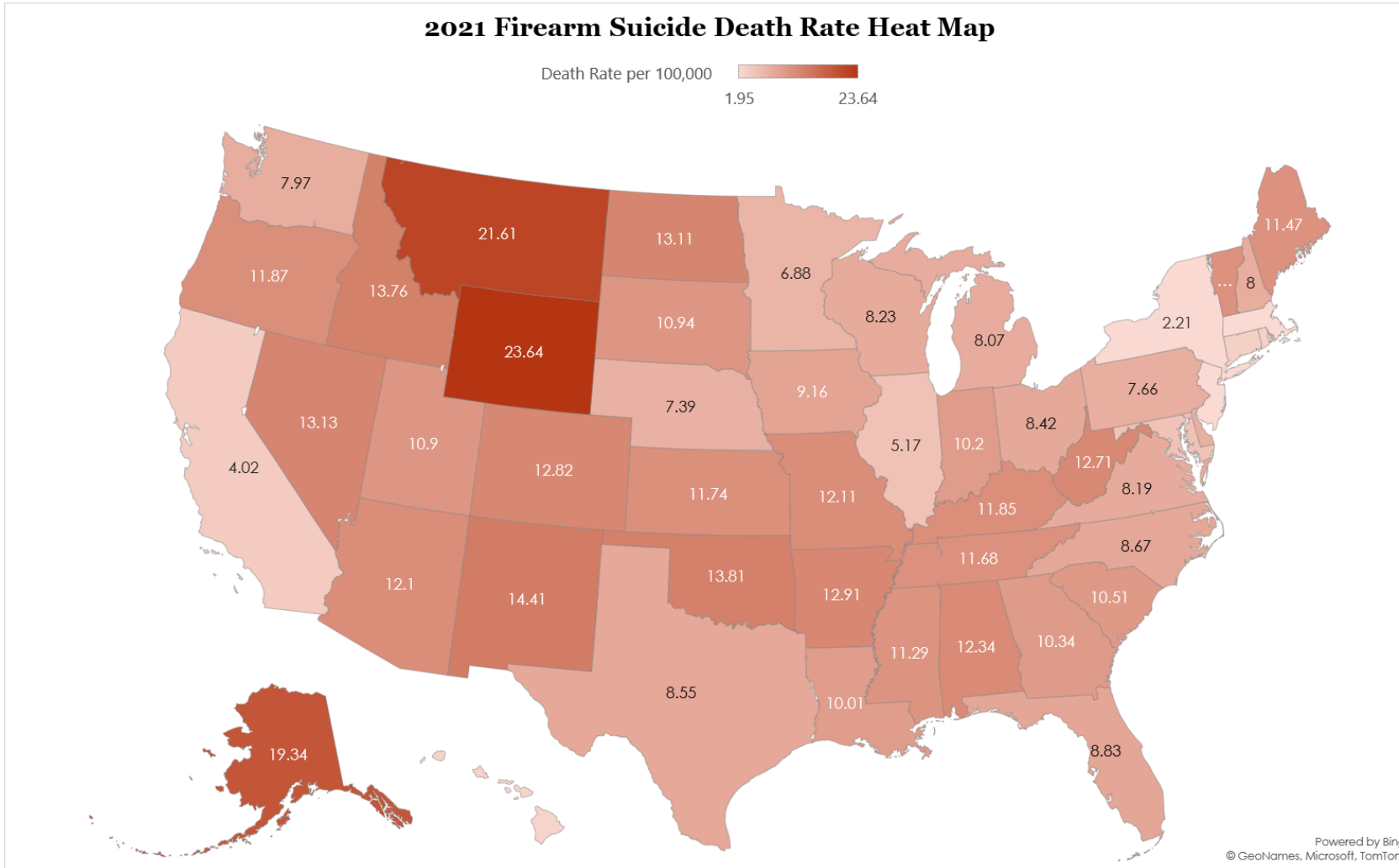
Our tabulations strongly suggest that having fewer households with guns substantially lowers a community's overall suicides (rather than changing the way suicide occurs).

The firearm suicide rate is **2.7 times 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 Remaining Slides Further Depict the Strong Correlation Between Gun Ownership and Suicides

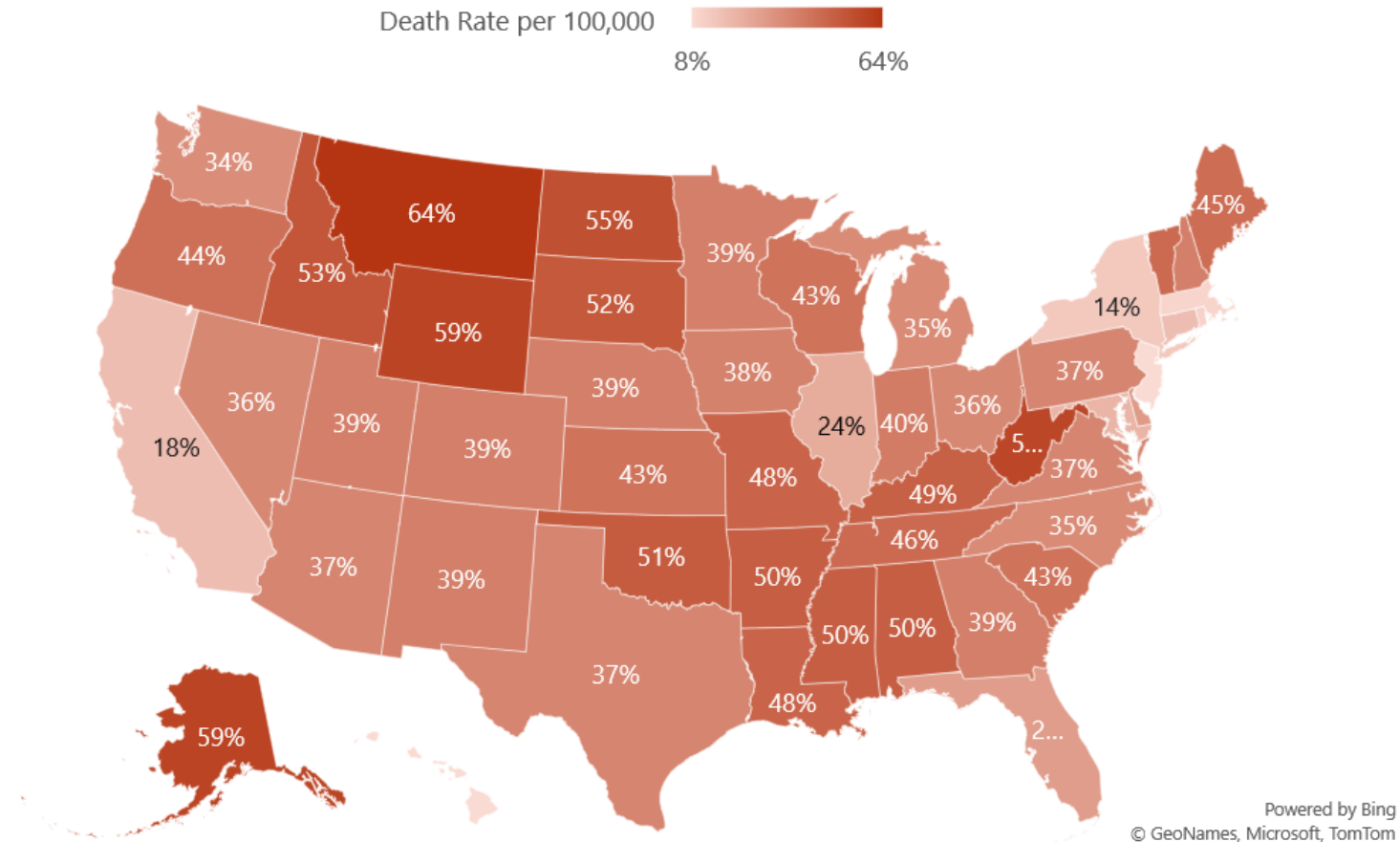
- The heat maps on the next two slides – one for household gun ownership rates and the other for suicide firearm death rates – look nearly identical to one another (demonstrating the strong correlation).
- Our final data slide plots each state along these two variables, showing the compelling linkage between firearm suicide rates and gun household rates.
- The greater the proportion of households in a state with one or more guns, the more suicides that occur.
- The next edition of our gun death series presents data showing that the same dynamic is occurring with homicides.

2021 Firearm Suicide Death Rates by State – Heat Map

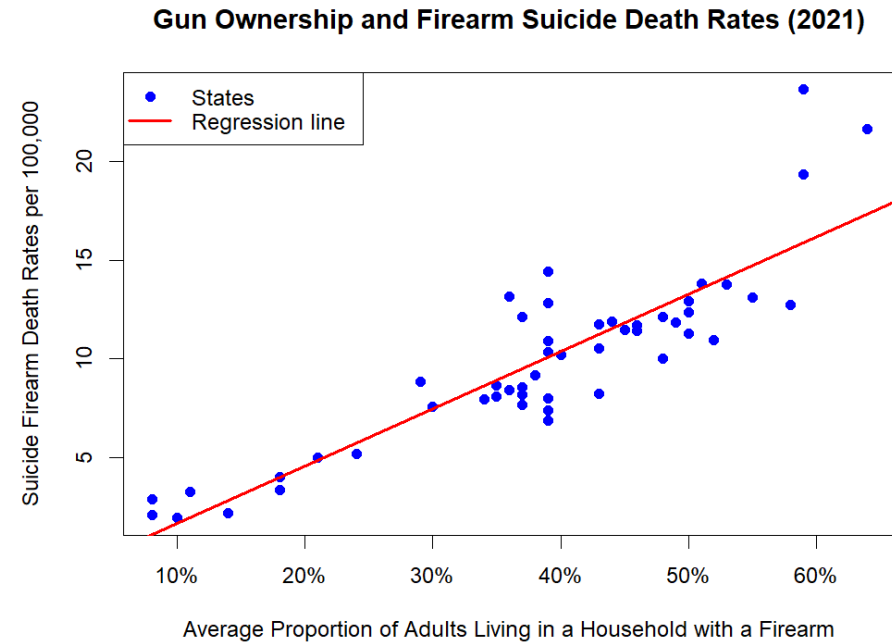
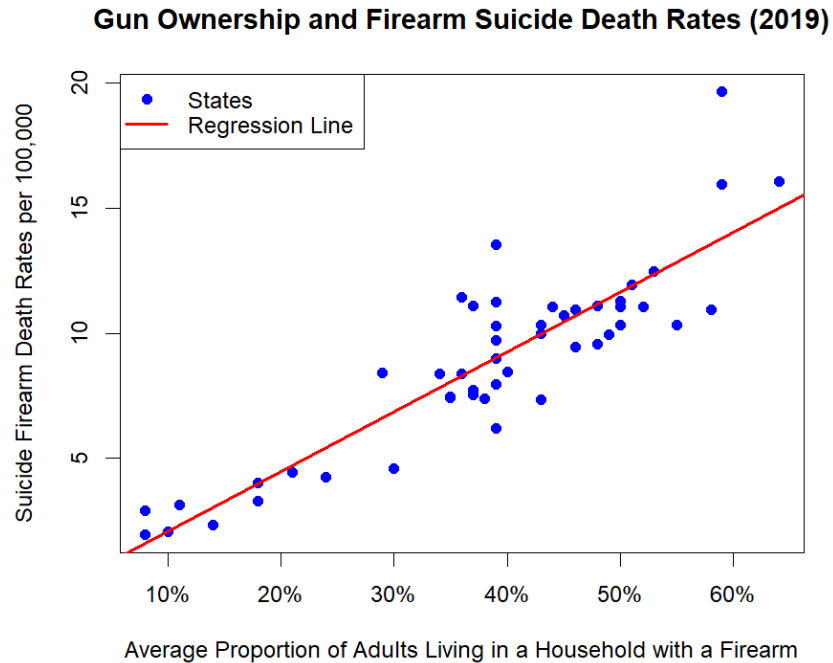


Percent of Households that Own Guns – Heat Map

Percent of USA Households that Own 1+ Guns by State (data span 10-year timeframe 2007-2016)



Household Gun Ownership and Firearm Suicide Rates are Highly Correlated



Note that we also assessed a pre-COVID year (2019) to discern whether the correlation we observed in 2021 could be attributed to COVID dynamics. This was not the case – the state distributions were highly similar in both years.

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.

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