

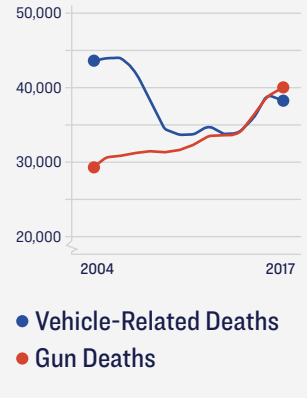


GUN VIOLENCE RESEARCH

Gun violence in America has reached a 40-year high. It's time for the federal government to adequately fund research into this issue. As the nation's health protection agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has the responsibility to save lives and protect people from health, safety, and security threats. Funding CDC research into gun violence is critical to understanding its causes and tackling the crisis that takes the lives of over 36,000 Americans every year.¹

RESEARCH PAYS OFF

The federal government spends roughly \$35 million per year researching car crashes, but less than \$2 million per year researching gun deaths.⁵ Car crash deaths have decreased dramatically, while the number of gun deaths has remained relatively stable.⁶

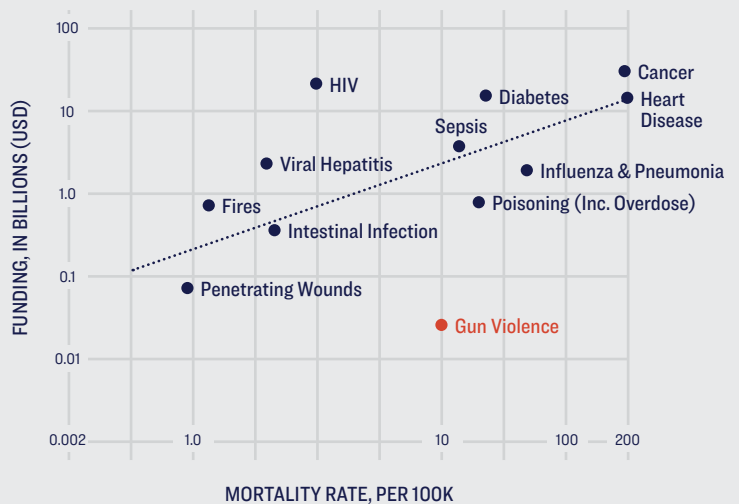


Most causes of death receive funding proportional to their burden on society. Gun deaths are one of the few exceptions.⁷

UNDERFUNDED RESEARCH

When confronted by other public health and safety problems, state and federal governments have coupled comprehensive research efforts with policy reforms. Unfortunately, the federal government has failed to adequately fund research into gun violence. **Researchers estimate that gun violence receives less than 2% of the funding it would be expected to receive based on the scope and toll of the problem.**² The underfunding of gun violence research is particularly stark when compared to funding for other common causes of death. The federal government spends only \$57 in research monies per gun death.³ By contrast, lung disease, cancer, and heart disease receive \$6,556, \$2,996, and \$1,740 per death, respectively.⁴

MORTALITY AND FUNDING FOR LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH



Source: David Stark and Nigam Shah, JAMA (2017)

The Importance of Federal Research Funding

Despite barriers, there has been a small amount of research into gun violence conducted in recent years. The National Institutes of Health has directed an average of \$2 million in federal money per year for the last 12 years for firearm violence research projects, and other private monies have helped fund vital research. Researchers have used this funding to evaluate particular state-level policies intended to address gun violence.⁸

Although these studies have provided an important evidence base for current gun violence prevention efforts, far more research is needed to effectively address a public safety issue of such large scale. **As the nation's premier public health research agency, the CDC is by far best-equipped to tackle this issue and bring its formidable research capabilities to one of the most urgent and daunting issues of our time.** Their research could vastly increase what is known about gun violence and support lifesaving policy reform.

INCREASE RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

Federal funding for gun violence research would allow scholars to investigate the characteristics of firearm violence and enhance our understanding of the risk factors for gun violence. Research could also expand on previous efforts to evaluate long-standing gun safety policies and intervention efforts as well as evaluate the impact of newer policies, such as extreme risk protection orders and hospital-based violence intervention programs.⁹

ADDRESS THE SCARCITY OF DATA

There are major gaps in existing data on gun violence. For example, there is no definitive count of the number of guns in circulation in the United States.¹⁰ Federal funding for gun violence research can help to fill some of these gaps and augment our understanding of this public safety problem.

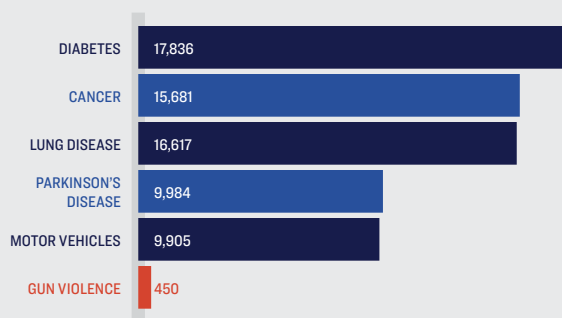
EXPAND THE POOL OF RESEARCHERS

Because of the lack of funding for gun violence research, only a few researchers have focused their careers and research efforts primarily on firearm violence.¹¹ Federal research funding can provide training grants to both new and experienced scholars to expand the pool of qualified gun violence researchers.

FEWER PUBLICATIONS

Compared to other leading causes of death, far fewer research articles have been published on gun violence—leaving policymakers ignorant about many aspects of this crisis, and less capable of making policy decisions informed by rigorous research.¹²

Rate of Research Publications per 100,000 Deaths



Source: Estimations based on publications data provided by David Stark; CDC WONDER

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR GUN VIOLENCE RESEARCH

A majority of Americans support efforts to increase federal funding for gun violence research.¹³

Additionally, more than 100 medical associations have called on Congress to provide funding for this research.¹⁴ The American people recognize that to solve this public safety crisis, we first need to understand it. **It's time for our leaders to step up, take action, and fund the CDC.**

ABOUT

The **Center for American Progress** is an independent, nonpartisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans, through bold, progressive ideas, as well as strong leadership and concerted action. Our aim is not just to change the conversation, but to change the country.

For 25 years, the legal experts at **Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence** have been fighting for a safer America by researching, drafting, and defending the laws, policies, and programs proven to save lives from gun violence.

CONTACT US

media@giffords.org

giffordslawcenter.org

FACEBOOK /Giffords TWITTER @GiffordsCourage

americanprogress.org

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Gun Violence Research Factsheet Citations

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3. 2004-2015 data on funding was compiled by David E. Stark and Nigam H. Shah. For more information see David E. Stark and Nigam H. Shah, "Funding and Publication of Research on Gun Violence and Other Leading Causes of Death." 2004-2015 data on mortality was compiled from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER), "Compressed Mortality File, 1999-2016," last accessed Jan. 7, 2019, <https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/datarequest/D140>.
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