

# MYTH vs. FACT

## Research on Gun Violence

**MYTH: Gun violence research is a way for anti-gun advocates to use tax payer money to advocate for gun control.**

**FACT: Unbiased research is made possible by government oversight and investment.**

The CDC is committed to applying rigorous scientific standards to ensure the accuracy and reliability of research results. For scientific and technical documents, the scientific community recognizes peer review as the primary means of quality control, and routinely seeks the input of highly qualified peer reviewers on the propriety, accuracy, completeness, and quality (including objectivity, utility, and integrity) of its materials.

**MYTH: Gun violence is not a disease; the CDC only studies diseases.**

**FACT: The CDC is dedicated to protecting Americans from health, safety and security threats. This includes public health threats.**

Gun violence is a public health issue. More than 55,000 people had a non-fatal gun injury in 2011 and more than 33,000 people died from gunshot in 2010. Firearm-related mortality is the country's fifth leading cause of years of potential life lost. The epidemic of firearm deaths in the U.S. merits serious investment in research and prevention.

**MYTH: Most guns used in high profile shootings were obtained illegally.**

**FACT: Evidence suggests most guns used in high profile shootings were obtained *legally*.**

Of the 93 mass shootings documented over the last 5 years, we have sufficient evidence on the shooters in 75 incidents (81%). Of these, over half (57%) of the shooters were NOT prohibited to possess a gun, and had legally obtained them.



**MYTH: Studies are irrelevant. What works to reduce gun violence is to make sure that criminals are prosecuted and those who have been found to be a danger to themselves or others don't have access to firearms.**

**FACT: While crime rate in the United States has dropped since the 1980s, the rate of non-fatal gun injuries continues to rise, indicating criminals are not the primary reason Americans are getting hurt by guns. More research needs to be done to determine why this rate continues to increase.**

Sadly, research has shown that homes in which a suicide had occurred were 4.8 times more likely to contain a firearm than similarly situated neighborhood homes that had not experienced a suicide.

Additionally, although many highly publicized shootings have involved persons with serious mental illness, it must be recognized that persons with serious mental illness commit only a small proportion of firearm-related homicides; the problem of gun violence cannot be resolved simply through efforts focused on serious mental illness.

**MYTH: Guns make us safer and prevent crime.**

**FACT: People who die from accidental shootings are more than three times as likely to have a gun in their home.**

Approximately one of three handguns is kept loaded and unlocked and most children know where their parents keep their guns.

There are no evidence-based studies in the literature to support the idea that guns prevent crime.

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**References:**

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