

Study: Eye injuries from BB and pellet guns rose

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Eye injuries from BB and pellet guns are higher than they were in 1990, despite overall injury rates declining, according to a new study.

Researchers from The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital analyzed 1990-'16 data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System on children under 18.

The data showed an estimated 13,486 children each year are treated in an emergency department for injuries from a nonpowder firearm, including BB, pellet, paintball and airsoft guns. Injuries occurred at a rate of about 19 per 100,000 children, which decreased by about 54.5% over the study period.

About 47% of the injured children were ages 6-12, and 47% were ages 13-17. About 87% were boys, and 7% were hospitalized, according to "Nonpowder Firearm Injuries to Children Treated in Emergency Departments," (Jones M, et al. *Pediatrics*. Nov. 25, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2019-2739>).

Roughly 46% of the children were diagnosed with having a foreign object in their body, while 22% had a puncture wound and 13.5% had a contusion/abrasion. Just over half of the injuries were self-inflicted.

About 15% of injuries were to the eye. The rate per 100,000 children rose 30% during the study period with a peak in 2006. The most common of these injuries was corneal abrasion followed by hyphema, globe rupture and foreign body.

BB guns were by far the most common firearm involved in all injuries, making up 81% of the cases. About 15.5% involved pellet guns, 3% involved paintball guns and 0.6% involved airsoft guns, according to the study.

Authors noted there are no mandatory federal safety standards for nonpowder firearms, and about half of states have laws that vary widely.

The AAP calls for youths to don protective eyewear when participating in sports or recreational activities that put them at risk of such injuries.

"Increased prevention efforts are needed in the form of stricter and more consistent safety legislation at the state level," authors wrote, "as well as in child and parental education regarding proper supervision, firearm handling, and use of protective eyewear."

Resource

- [Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org on airsoft guns](#)

