

Firearm Violence and Children: Role of the Hospitalist

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Hospital Pediatrics has now published several review papers and commentaries on the important topic of gun violence. This month's contribution comes from a group that has been working tirelessly to promote awareness and disseminate educational and advocacy tools. In this Special Article entitled "Engagement and Leadership in Firearm-Related Violence Prevention: the Role of the Pediatric Hospitalist" ([10.1542/hpeds.2019-0327](#)), the authors begin by including a heart-breaking narrative from a

survivor of a childhood gunshot wound inflicted by her sibling. We have all heard these stories and cared for these patients. We mourn for the victim. We also mourn for the child who found and discharged the gun, who will be forever haunted by that memory.

The authors provide a "framework to act", covering clinical care, advocacy, education, and research.

Although many of the publicized tragedies involving children focus on school shootings or accidental home shootings like the one described in this Special Article, gun deaths by suicide tend to get less attention.

Nearly 2/3 of US gun deaths are self-inflicted, and more than 1000 firearm suicides occur each year in the 10-19 year-old age range. Safe gun storage is certainly important in preventing accidental shootings, and evidence suggests it likely reduces adolescent suicides as well. However, adolescents are savvy, so the safest approach is certainly to get the gun out of the home, which decreases the probability of suicide by gun owners themselves as well. Asking about gun ownership and providing educational materials can help.

Not surprisingly, several public health crises have taken a backseat during the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, mental health concerns will only increase as this pandemic evolves, and we must not lose focus on the daily threat posed by gun violence.

- [Pediatric Hospitalists at the Front Line of Gun Violence Prevention: Every Patient Encounter Is an Opportunity to Promote Safe Gun Storage](#)
- [Gone but Not Forgotten: Violent Trauma Victimization and the Treatment of Violence Like a Disease](#)

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