

Taking Aim at Reducing Firearm-Related Mortality Through State Laws

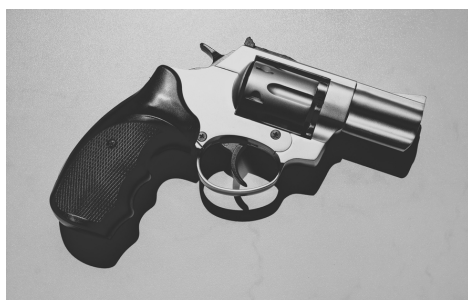
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How can we reduce firearm-related mortality? At a state level, there are three types of laws that some states have passed to try to address this — (1) universal background checks for firearm purchase, (2) universal background checks for ammunition purchase, and (3) an identification requirement for owning firearms involving microstamping or ballistic finger printing.

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How can we reduce firearm-related mortality? At a state level, there are three types of laws that some states have passed to try to address this — (1) universal background checks for firearm purchase, (2) universal background checks for ammunition purchase, and (3) an identification requirement for owning firearms involving microstamping or ballistic finger printing. Does passage of these state laws make a difference when it comes to reducing firearm-related mortality in children and youth 24 years

of age or less? Goyal et al. ([10.1542/peds.2018-3283](#)) decided to try to answer that question through a serial cross-sectional study using 2011-2015 national data sets that included information on state firearm laws and firearm related deaths. Of the 21,241 deaths recorded during the period of study, the authors found an association between stricter gun laws and lower mortality from firearms. In particular, having a state law requiring universal background checks for purchase of a firearm had the strongest association with decreased mortality rates.

What are the implications of these findings in terms of what we should do as pediatricians and child advocates? We invited Drs. Lois Lee and Judy Schaechter, ([10.1542/peds.2019-1300](#)) who have a strong interest in firearm-related mortality prevention efforts, to weigh-in with an accompanying commentary. They note the important findings in this study, but also wish that more granular data were available, including the intent leading to the firearm-related deaths. They also believe that it is important for states to pass multiple laws to fully address the risk of firearm-related deaths. Unfortunately, too few states have done this to be able to analyze whether there is a synergistic effect. Regardless, it is important for us to remember to counsel families about firearm safety, even for families who do not own firearms because their children might come across a firearm in another home. Take a look at this study and commentary to learn more.

- [Pediatric Collections: Firearms](#)
- [Family Firearm Ownership and Firearm-Related Mortality Among Young Children: 1976–2016](#)
- [Firearm Injuries and Children: Position Statement of the American Pediatric Surgical Association](#)
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