

Comparison of acute versus previous gunshot wound patients' views on firearms

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Study Objective: Despite media attention on incidents of fatal gunshot wounds (GSWs), there are significantly more nonfatal gunshot wounds that occur (Ranney et. al., 2017). Many of those non-fatal encounters take place in the emergency department (ED). Understanding lived experiences of patients with acute and previous GSWs may inform future public health policy and interventions to reduce firearm violence. The purpose of this study is to utilize interviews of ED patients and compare their views on firearms. This study contrasts the views of firearms of those who have suffered an acute Gunshot wound (aGSW) versus a previous Gunshot Wound (pGSW).

Methods: Acute gunshot wound (aGSW) and previous gunshot wound (pGSW) patients were identified at Tampa General Hospital using electronic records. Patients were interviewed with a semi-structured questionnaire format in the emergency department of a single institution. The protocol and interview questions were approved by the University of South Florida IRB. The questionnaire answers were coded in Microsoft excel and data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics. These categorical variables were analyzed using a Pearson's Chi Squared test and significance was set at $p=.05$. Codes and analysis from Ninety-two interviews conducted prior to May 2022 were combined with four additional interviews conducted by these authors (JJ and PW) after May 2022.

Results: Ninety-six patients were interviewed at TGH, 57 aGSW (59.4%) and 39 pGSW (40.6%). The age when shot was grouped into the following categories: 18 to 24 years (26%), 25-34 years (21.9%), 35-54 years (11.5%), and 55+ years (3.1%); for the remaining 37.5%, their age was unknown at the time of the GSW or the question was not answered. When inquired about what occurred when the patient was a victim of a GSW the 3 most common answers were: Innocent bystander (22.9%), Altercation with a stranger (17.7%), and No Response (18.8%). Upon chi squared analysis we found no difference in patients for the following questions: Are there people who should not be allowed to own guns ($p=0.668$), Should people be allowed to own Hunting Rifles ($p=0.208$), Should people be allowed to own handguns ($p=0.364$), Do you own a gun ($p=0.950$), You got shot. Did this change your views on who should own guns ($p=0.543$).

Conclusion: There was no statistically significant difference of opinion between acute and previous gunshot wound patients. However, there is a slight change of opinion in the previous gunshot wound group. Their opinions became in favor of gun safety and abolishing guns. One theory could be that these patients have had the time to process the incident. Another theory is that they have had to deal with the consequences of gunshot wounds for a longer period of time. There should be future research exploring the reason for this slight change in opinion.

Ranney, M. L., Fletcher, J., Alter, H., Barsotti, C., Bebart, V. S., Betz, M. E., ... ACEP Technical Advisory Group on Firearm Injury Research, a Subcommittee of the ACEP Research Committee. (2017). A consensus-driven agenda for emergency medicine firearm injury prevention research. *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, 69(2), 227–240

Table 1. Cohort characteristics.

Variable	n (%)
GSW	
Acute	57 (59.4)
Previous	39 (40.6)
Gender	
Male	80 (83.3)
Female	11 (11.5)
Transgender	1 (1.0)
Age When Shot	
18-24 Years	25 (26.0)
25-34 Years	21 (21.9)
35-54 Years	11 (11.5)
55+ Years	3 (3.1)
Census Category	
White	19 (19.8)
Black	57 (59.4)
Hispanic	16 (16.7)
Native American	1 (1.0)
Middle Eastern	1 (1.0)
Unspecified	2 (2.1)
What Happened	
Self-inflicted (Accident)	13 (13.5)
Self-inflicted (Altercation)	2 (2.1)
Altercation (Known Shooter)	10 (10.4)
Altercation (Unknown Shooter)	17 (17.7)
Targeted Shooting	14 (14.6)
Innocent Bystander	22 (22.9)
No Response	18 (18.8)
Grade Finished	
Below 8th	9 (9.4)
9 th to 11 th	31 (32.3)
12 th	25 (26.0)
Post HS Education	30 (31.2)
	1 (1.0)

Table 2. Gun Shot Wound Victims

Variable	aGSW (n =57) # Yes	pGSW (n = 39) # Yes	P - value
Are there people who should not be allowed to own guns?	51	35	.668
Should people be allowed to own Hunting Rifles?	32	20	.208
Should people be allowed to own handguns?	33	22	.364
Do you own a gun?	41	27	.950
You got shot. Did this change your views on who should own guns?	22	12	.543