Confronting a public health crisis: the medical community's role in preventing gun violence

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MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL
THE MASS GENERAL CENTER FOR GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Northeastern University
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We have no financial disclosures

It is hard not to think about gun violence

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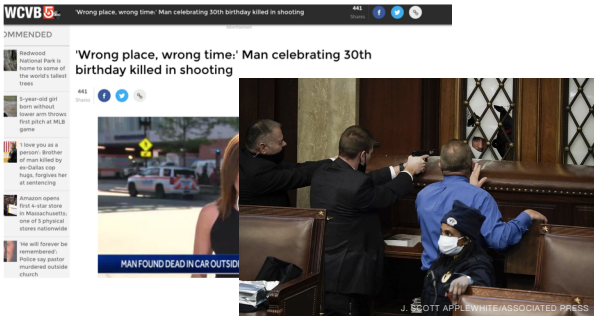
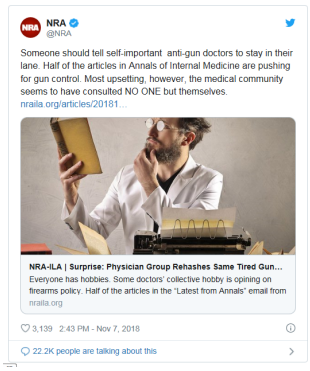
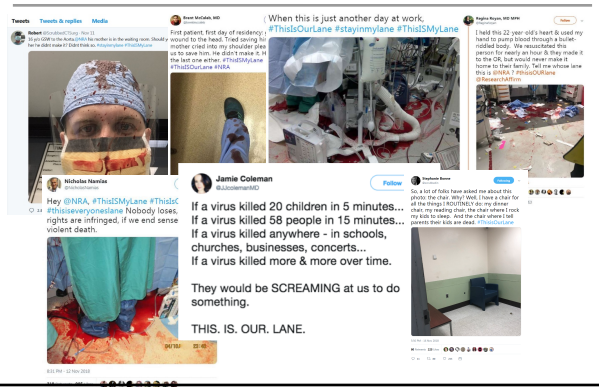


On November 7, 2018, the NRA told doctors to “stay in their lane”

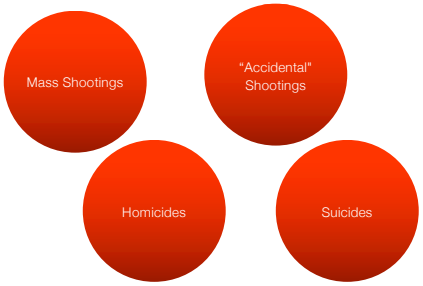


…And doctors responded



What are the next 10 words?

Firearm-related deaths are due to 4 different types of violence



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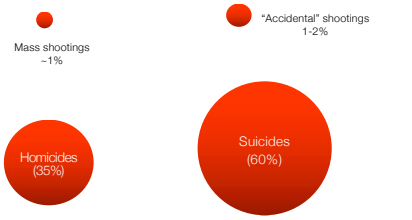
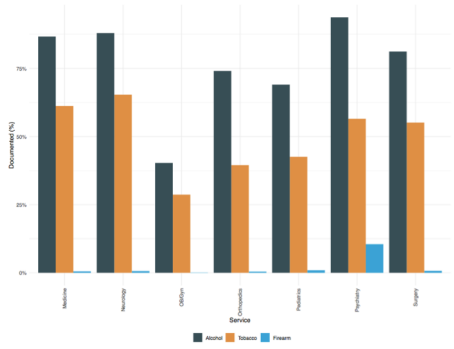


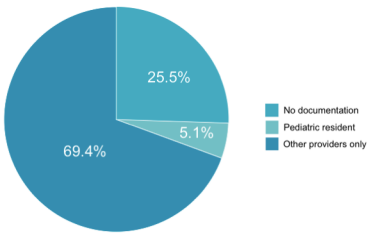
CDC *Wisqars* 2017.
Gun Violence Archive 2017.

Any discussion of firearm access during hospitalizations is rare (N=80,447)



Sacks et al. Unpublished data.

In 2018, at MGH, trainees asked high-risk adolescents about firearm access ~5% of the time



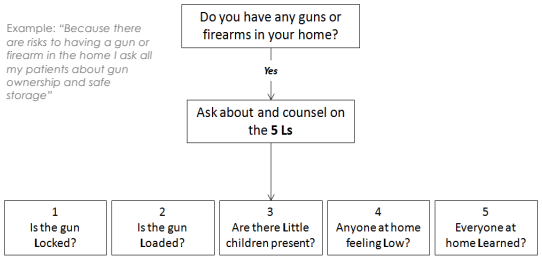
N = 98

C. Li, et al. *Academic Peds* 2019

Every incoming MGH intern went through our novel simulation-based training program

When talking about firearms, focus on health and use a non-judgmental approach

- Example: *"Because there are risks to having a gun or firearm in the home I ask all my patients about gun ownership and safe storage"*



Wintemute and colleagues, UC Davis

Vulnerable populations are at increased risk of gun violence

- Women experiencing intimate partner violence are up to 5-12X more likely to be killed if there is a gun in the home
- Gun violence disproportionately affects communities of color
- Gun misuse and suicide is problematic among older adults, especially among people with cognitive impairment

This is true, right here in Boston, one of the safest cities in one of the safest states

Roxbury mom and activist Monica Cannon-Grant speaks to crowd at WBUR's Cityspace as Nestor Ramos, John Rosenthal, and House Speaker Robert DeLeo look on.

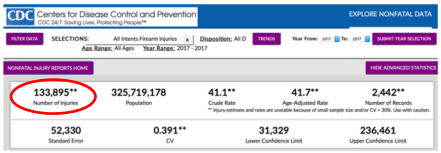
GUNS

Students interrupt WBUR gun violence event

Say high-profile panel not addressing their concerns

What won't work? Focusing only on gun deaths.

In contrast to precise tracking of fatalities, data on nonfatal injuries are limited



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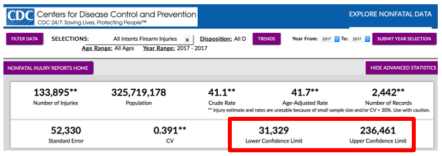
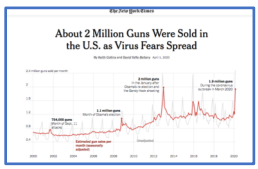


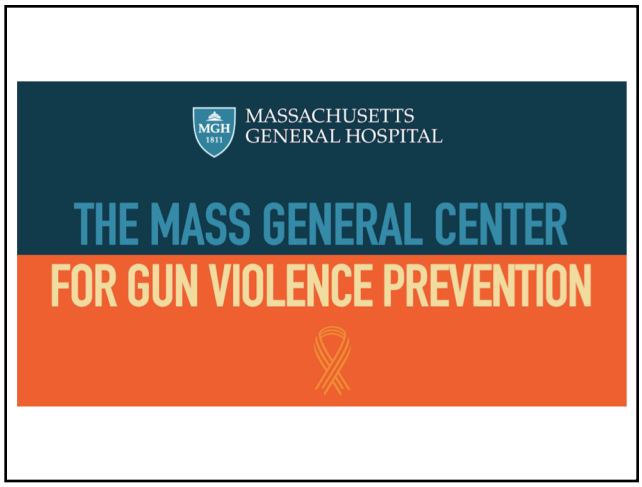
MGH Center for Gun Violence Prevention



- **Education**: 150+ residents across 6 Departments have undergone simulation training in how to have conversations about firearm safety with patients
- **Community Engagement**: Affiliations with Emerson College, MGH/Red Sox Home Base, Louis D. Brown Peace Institute
- **Research**: Mini-grant program coming January 2021 – what are your ideas to tackle this public health crisis?

Community partners are critical to this effort, keeping survivors at the center of this work

BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION
BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF BOSTON
BOSTON POLICE
A.D. 1630
SHERIFF
Emerson COLLEGE
LOUIS D. BROWN PEACE INSTITUTE
HOME BASE
VETERAN AND FAMILY CARE
Sandy Hook PROMISE
Massachusetts Coalition To Prevent Gun Violence
HARVARD T.H. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH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