

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Wed, 1 Sep 2021 18:53:01 +0000  
**To:** DVP Policy Requests (CDC)  
**Cc:** Menon, Akshara N. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Kaigler, Alexis (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** CLOSED - FW: Correction Needed: CDC's Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

CLOSED – please file this request as closed in the in-box and record it in the tracker. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Beth

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**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 2:52 PM  
**To:** Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Cc:** Hulkower, Rachel (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >; Menon, Akshara N. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** FW: Correction Needed: CDC's Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

Kinzie,

The White House sent a response similar to the one Deb shared below and offered that Deb would be open to having a call with Mr. Hughes. Let me know if you want to send a response back to Ms. Murray, or if you want to hold off. If you decide to send a response to Ms. Murphy we suggest the response below. Please let me know if you need anything else from me. Thanks! -Beth

Dear Ms. Murray,

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

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**From:** Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 10:33 AM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Cc:** Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >; Hulkower, Rachel (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD)  
< >  
**Subject:** RE: Correction Needed: CDC's Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

Hi – Here's what Deb responded with:

Hi Lee

We appreciate this feedback. We've reviewed the materials and CDC's fact sheet notes that estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the data source, questions asked, populations studied, timeframes, and other factors related to the design of studies. Estimates from the Gun Violence Archive represent another data source and estimates based on that source will also vary from other estimates, especially from population-based surveys that gather information that may not ever be reported to official sources like law enforcement. The methodology used to capture defensive gun violence by the Gun Violence Archive represents a very small subset of people who have used guns defensively, and does not include individuals who might have used guns defensively, but not reported this use to law enforcement. e.g. a person who comes to the front porch with a gun to deter a stranger from trespassing on his/her property and then doesn't think anything of it when the stranger leaves the property. With the # of studies and estimates used for this range in the fact sheet an update is not warranted at this time.

Happy to talk through this with you before you send on  
Deb

Deb Houry, MD, MPH  
Acting Principal Deputy Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 8:49 AM  
**To:** Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Cc:** Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >; Hulkower, Rachel (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD)

**Subject:** FW: Correction Needed: CDC's Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

Melissa,

Please see the request below, which Deb also received via White House channels. If that response has already gone to the WH could you please share it Peggy Rice from OA, and the final with us so that we can craft a response to this constituent and Peggy can follow-up with Durbin's Office?

Beth

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**From:** Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 8:15 AM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Correction Needed: CDC's Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

Hi Beth, do you have a minute to talk about how we might want to engage with this?

This came my way as a partner request, but it really looks like a media request.

• *Kinzie*

---

**From:** Po Murray < >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 8:03 AM  
**To:** Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >; Devin Hughes < >  
**Subject:** Correction Needed: CDC's Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

Hi Kinzie,

Senator Durbin's office gave me your contact information. Devin Hughes from GVPedia and I wanted to connect with you to see if you could help us correct the misinformation on the CDC's firearm violence prevention fact sheet.

Is there a time next week you can meet with us via Zoom to discuss?

Thanks so much.

Best Regards,

Po Murray

Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation

[NewtownAction.org](http://NewtownAction.org)

P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470



Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Devin Hughes <(b)(6)>  
**Date:** August 6, 2021 at 2:44:30 PM EDT  
**To:** Po Murray <>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Devin Hughes <(b)(6)>  
**Date:** Tue, Jul 6, 2021, 1:33 PM  
**Subject:** Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet  
**To:** <[Media@cdc.gov](mailto:Media@cdc.gov)>

Dear Director Bonds:

I'm writing to you today with a suggested revision to the [Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet](#) on the CDC's website. I am the president and founder of GVPedia, a non-profit that provides access to gun violence research and data. Our mission is to ensure that policymakers have access to the most accurate, reliable, and up to date gun violence research.

Under the section of the fact sheet titled "What is defensive gun use? How often does it occur?" the following information is provided:

*"Although definitions of defensive gun use vary, it is generally defined as the use of a firearm to protect and defend one's self, family, others, and/or property against crime or victimization.*

*Estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the questions asked, populations studied, timeframe, and other factors related to the design of studies. The report [Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence](#) indicates a range of 60,000 to 2.5 million defensive gun uses each year."*

The 2.5 million figure cited by the fact sheet and the report referenced come from small private surveys conducted in the 1990s. These surveys came under intense academic scrutiny, which uncovered a number of fatal flaws in their methodology. Dr. David Hemewnay of Harvard University [published](#) *Survey Research and Self-Defense Gun*



*Use: An Explanation of Extreme Overestimates* in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology that examines these surveys and explains the extreme overestimates. Further, the report referenced in the fact sheet, [\*Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence\*](#), was published in 2013, and therefore, does not include data from the Gun Violence Archive, the most widely accepted compendium of gun violence data. GVA started providing data in 2014, a year after the report was published. Data from the Gun Violence Archive indicates approximately 2,000 verified defensive gun uses annually. This data, based on police and media reports, is substantially lower than the estimates provided by private surveys (which estimate around 2.5 million) and the NCVS surveys (which estimate around 60,000).

Given the substantial concerns raised by academics about DGU survey results, and considering the new data from the Gun Violence Archive, we urge the CDC to revisit and update the DGU portion of the factsheet. People wishing to learn about gun violence rely on the CDC to provide accurate, up-to-date information. Citing figures based on decades-old, discredited surveys could produce a misleading picture of gun violence today. The public and policy makers need accurate data to make informed decisions.

GVPedia has compiled a factsheet highlighting the existing research and the flaws in the 2.5 million figure, which can be found [here](#). I've written extensively on the topic and would be more than happy to discuss this further, and/or provide further resources.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Devin Hughes, President & Founder

GVPedia

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Devin L. Hughes, CFA  
Hughes Capital Management, LLC

(b)(6)

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Thu, 2 Sep 2021 20:36:00 +0000  
**To:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Dahlberg, Linda L. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** FW: Correction Needed: CDC's Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

FYI, [REDACTED] We can discuss off-line at our next leadership meeting. Stay tuned. -Beth

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**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 4:33 PM  
**To:** Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <[REDACTED]>; Watkins, Jacqueline (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <[REDACTED]>; Hulkower, Rachel (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** RE: Correction Needed: CDC's Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

Hey! Please send this to Deb Houry and let her decide how she wants to handle. She has offered to have a call with Mr. Hughes [REDACTED] Thanks!

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**From:** Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 4:21 PM  
**To:** Watkins, Jacqueline (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <[REDACTED]>; Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) <[REDACTED]>; Hulkower, Rachel (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** FW: Correction Needed: CDC's Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

Hello!

Just received this response back, may be worthwhile for us to talk more about this as I [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

- Kinzie

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**From:** Devin Hughes <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 4:03 PM  
**To:** Po Murray <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Correction Needed: CDC's Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

Hi Kinzie,

Thank you for your response.

While I appreciate you taking the time to review and respond to my comments, I respectfully disagree with your assertion that: "The methodology used to capture defensive gun violence by the Gun Violence Archive represents a very small subset of people who have used guns defensively, and does not include individuals who might



have used guns defensively, but not reported this use to law enforcement. e.g. a person who comes to the front porch with a gun to deter a stranger from trespassing on his/her property and then doesn't think anything of it when the stranger leaves the property."

This claim of "a very small subset" is factually inaccurate according to the very surveys cited to produce the range of defense gun uses on your fact sheet. The results produced by both the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) and Dr. Gary Kleck's surveys indicate that police were informed about the alleged DGU in more than 60% of cases. Specifically, respondents to Kleck's survey, which found 2.5 million DGUs annually, indicate that police were informed of or found out about 64.2% of the respondents' alleged DGUs. This indicates empirical evidence of 1,605,000 DGUs should exist annually. Yet police and media reports collected by the Gun Violence Archive find fewer than 2,000 verified DGUs. Even assuming that only the 23.9% of cases where shots were fired (according to Kleck's survey) are recorded, that would still mean 597,500 cases, yet empirical evidence for only 0.3% of those actually exists.

Given that both the NCVS and small private surveys such as Kleck's explicitly reject the conclusion that "a very small subset" of people report DGUs to the police, this means one of two things:

1. The data from NCVS and Kleck's surveys is entirely wrong about people reporting incidents to the police, and it is in reality a small subset. This would inherently mean that if the surveys are wrong about such a large percentage of their respondents, there is no reason to treat the rest of the surveys' claims as accurate; or
2. The data from NCVS and Kleck's surveys is correct that more than 60% of people with a DGU report the incident to the police. If that reporting percentage is correct, then GVA should be capturing the majority of overall DGUs, which in turn means that the overall DGU numbers produced by NCVS and Kleck are vast overestimates.

Unless one suggests that GVA misses more than 90% of DGUs that are reported to the police -- even though no other researcher or organization has found more verified DGUs than GVA -- it is clear that the CDC Factsheet is citing inaccurate information.

These facts, along with the substantial academic literature pointing out the extreme risk of false positives outweighing false negatives in surveys of statistically rare events (a problem that is not exclusive to the topic of DGUs), should be sufficient to demonstrate the need for further contextualization. [Additional research](#) demonstrates that Kleck's surveys produce criminologically impossible results, and [similar surveys](#) indicate that a majority of self-reported DGUs in such surveys are likely illegal (and therefore not beneficial to society). Without acknowledging the sizable problems with survey-based DGU estimates, the DGU numbers alone are likely to promote a misleading narrative about the dangers versus benefits of firearm ownership.

I would strongly urge the CDC to consider revising the factsheet to add further context, or at the very least removing the DGU section until better data emerges. I would be more than happy to meet virtually to further discuss the research surrounding DGUs and how best to correct the misinformation in the Factsheet.

Best,  
Devin

On Thu, Sep 2, 2021 at 11:53 AM Po Murray <po@murray.com> > wrote:  
Hi Kinzie,  
Thank you so much for your quick response. I am copying Devin on this email so that he can respond.  
Best Regards,  
Po Murray  
Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation  
[NewtownAction.org](http://NewtownAction.org)  
P.O. Box 3325. Newtown CT 06470



On Thu, Sep 2, 2021 at 10:59 AM Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <kinzie.lee@hhs.gov> > wrote:  
Good morning, Po,

Thank you for reaching out to me, we always appreciate feedback and insight into how partners and other organizations are responding to our web-content. After connecting with a few folks internally it looks like we've received a few similar requests from other avenues as well.

We've done an internal review of the materials and CDC's fact sheet does note that estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the data source, questions asked, populations studied, timeframes, and other factors related to the design of studies. Estimates from the Gun Violence Archive represent another data source and estimates based on that source will also vary from other estimates, especially from population-based surveys that gather information that may not ever be reported to official sources like law enforcement. The methodology used to capture defensive gun violence by the Gun Violence Archive represents a very small subset of people who have used guns defensively, and does not include individuals who might have used guns defensively, but not reported this use to law enforcement. e.g. a person who comes to the front porch with a gun to deter a stranger from trespassing on his/her property and then doesn't think anything of it when the stranger leaves the property.

After review and considering the number of studies and estimates used for this range in the fact sheet, our SME's have decided that an update is not warranted at this time. Please let me know if you have any additional questions that isn't addressed by this response.

Regards,  
Kinzie



S. Kinzie Lee, MPH | CDR, U.S. Public Health Service  
Lead, Strategic Partnerships  
Office of Policy and Partnerships | National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## CDC's Injury Center

Preventing Injuries and Violence  
Through Science and Action



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**From:** Po Murray < >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 8:03 AM  
**To:** Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >; Devin Hughes < >  
**Subject:** Correction Needed: CDC's Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

Hi Kinzie,

Senator Durbin's office gave me your contact information. Devin Hughes from GVPedia and I wanted to connect with you to see if you could help us correct the misinformation on the CDC's firearm violence prevention fact sheet.

Is there a time next week you can meet with us via Zoom to discuss?

Thanks so much.

Best Regards,  
Po Murray  
Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation  
[NewtownAction.org](http://NewtownAction.org)  
P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470



Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Devin Hughes < (b)(6) >  
**Date:** August 6, 2021 at 2:44:30 PM EDT  
**To:** Po Murray < >  
**Subject:** Fwd: Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Devin Hughes** <[devin.hughes@cdc.gov](mailto:devin.hughes@cdc.gov)> (b)(6)  
Date: Tue, Jul 6, 2021, 1:33 PM  
Subject: Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet  
To: <[Media@cdc.gov](mailto:Media@cdc.gov)>

Dear Director Bonds:

I'm writing to you today with a suggested revision to the Firearm Violence Prevention [fact sheet](#) on the CDC's website. I am the president and founder of GVPedia, a non-profit that provides access to gun violence research and data. Our mission is to ensure that policymakers have access to the most accurate, reliable, and up to date gun violence research.

Under the section of the fact sheet titled "What is defensive gun use? How often does it occur?" the following information is provided:

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The 2.5 million figure cited by the fact sheet and the report referenced come from small private surveys conducted in the 1990s. These surveys came under intense academic scrutiny, which uncovered a number of fatal flaws in their methodology. Dr. David Hemewnay of Harvard University [published](#) *Survey Research and Self-Defense Gun Use: An Explanation of Extreme Overestimates* in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology that examines these surveys and explains the extreme overestimates. Further, the report referenced in the fact sheet, [Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence](#), was published in 2013, and therefore, does not include data from the Gun Violence Archive, the most widely accepted compendium of gun violence data. GVA started providing data in 2014, a year after the report was published. Data from the Gun Violence Archive indicates approximately 2,000 verified defensive gun uses annually. This data, based on police and media reports, is substantially lower than the estimates provided by private surveys (which estimate around 2.5 million) and the NCVS surveys (which estimate around 60,000).

Given the substantial concerns raised by academics about DGU survey results, and considering the new data from the Gun Violence Archive, we urge the CDC to revisit and update the DGU portion of the factsheet. People wishing to learn about gun violence rely on the CDC to provide accurate, up-to-date information. Citing figures based on

decades-old, discredited surveys could produce a misleading picture of gun violence today. The public and policy makers need accurate data to make informed decisions.

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GVPedia

--

Devin L. Hughes, CFA  
Hughes Capital Management, LLC

(b)(6)

**From:** Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD)  
**Sent:** Wed, 1 Sep 2021 12:53:32 +0000  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Cc:** Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD); Hulkower, Rachel (CDC/DDPHSIS/CSTLTS/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Correction Needed: CDC's Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

Hi Beth – Checking on this now, stay tuned.

Melissa

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**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 8:49 AM  
**To:** Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Cc:** Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >; Hulkower, Rachel (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
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Beth

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Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation

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P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470



Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Devin Hughes [redacted] (b)(6)  
**Date:** August 6, 2021 at 2:44:30 PM EDT  
**To:** Po Murray <[redacted]>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Devin Hughes [redacted] (b)(6)  
**Date:** Tue, Jul 6, 2021, 1:33 PM  
**Subject:** Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet  
**To:** <[Media@cdc.gov](mailto:Media@cdc.gov)>

Dear Director Bonds:

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GVPedia has compiled a factsheet highlighting the existing research and the flaws in the 2.5 million figure, which can be found [here](#). I've written extensively on the topic and would be more than happy to discuss this further, and/or provide further resources.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Devin Hughes, President & Founder

GVPedia

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Devin L. Hughes, CFA

Hughes Capital Management, LLC

(b)(6)

**From:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Mon, 27 Sep 2021 16:59:06 +0000  
**To:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** FW: 12 Defensive Gun Uses Underscore Fallacy of Mexico's Gun Lawsuit

Example of how our website is cited in a way that is not what we are suggesting. See link below.

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**From:** Hargarten, Stephen < >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 18, 2021 10:48 AM  
**To:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** FW: 12 Defensive Gun Uses Underscore Fallacy of Mexico's Gun Lawsuit

See link below.

They quote the CDC on defensive gun use...

**12 Defensive Gun Uses Underscore Fallacy of Mexico's Gun Lawsuit**

[https://www.dailysignal.com/2021/08/17/12-defensive-gun-uses-underscore-fallacy-of-mexicos-gun-lawsuit/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=12-defensive-gun-uses-underscore-fallacy-of-mexicos-gun-lawsuit](https://www.dailysignal.com/2021/08/17/12-defensive-gun-uses-underscore-fallacy-of-mexicos-gun-lawsuit/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=12-defensive-gun-uses-underscore-fallacy-of-mexicos-gun-lawsuit)



**From:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Tue, 10 May 2022 14:25:24 +0000  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Massetti, Greta M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** RE: FOR REVIEW and CLEARANCE FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Looks good to me.

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 10, 2022 10:16 AM  
**To:** Massetti, Greta M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** FOR REVIEW and CLEARANCE FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Please see the proposed response to the media request from Trace. Tom has reviewed. Let me know if you agree. Thanks! -Beth

(b)(5)

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**From:** Kelly, Bert (CDC/OD/OADC) < >  
**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 6:23 PM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Yes, no rush.

Thx

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**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 5:54 PM  
**To:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Kelly, Bert (CDC/OD/OADC) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Unless this reporter is on deadline, I will get something to you in the morning, Bert.

---

**From:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 5:52 PM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Kelly, Bert (CDC/OD/OADC) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Hi Beth,

Please see this request from the Trace. Bert, they are not asking for a number but rather for information about the change that was made when we updated the content on the fact sheet. We made several changes, including updating statistics, updating references, adding resources related to safe storage, and we simplified the text related to defensive gun use. The original text provided an estimate with a very wide range – between 60,000 and 2.5 million. It will be important to get Beth's perspective on this before answering.

-Tom

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**From:** Kelly, Bert (CDC/OD/OADC) < >  
**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 5:04 PM  
**To:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Hi Tom,

Do we have any statistics on defensive use of firearms?

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**From:** NMB Media Inquiry System (CDC) < >  
**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 3:48 PM  
**To:** Pauley, Scott (CDC/OD/OADC) < >  
**Subject:** Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Inquiry [MIS-131878](#) has been created and assigned to **Pauley, Scott (CDC/OD/OADC)** .

[Mobile Link](#) | [Details](#)

**Priority:** Normal

**Deadline DateTime:** 2022-05-09 18:00:00.0

**Summary:** Defensive gun use

**Status:** PO Review

**Media Outlet :** [TheTrace]

**Team:** Deputy Team

**Media Reporter:** Jennifer Mascia

**Email Address:**

**Phone:**

**Inquiry Description:**

Hi there,

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I'm working on a story about the frequency of defensive gun use. This figure has been hotly contested over the years and varies widely, with conservative estimates in the tens of thousands, while gun rights advocates embrace the higher figure of 2.5 million per year.

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Hope to talk soon!

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—

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News writer, [The Trace](#)

[@JenniferMascia](#)



**From:** Massetti, Greta M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Tue, 10 May 2022 14:24:12 +0000  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** Re: FOR REVIEW and CLEARANCE FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

(b)(5)

Thanks Beth.

Greta Massetti, PhD

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 10, 2022 10:16:06 AM  
**To:** Massetti, Greta M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
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(CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Yes, no rush.

Thx

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 5:54 PM  
**To:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Kelly, Bert (CDC/OD/OADC) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
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[Mobile Link](#) | [Details](#)

**Priority:** Normal

**Deadline DateTime:** 2022-05-09 18:00:00.0

**Summary:** Defensive gun use

**Status:** PO Review

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**Team:** Deputy Team

**Media Reporter:** Jennifer Mascia

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**Phone:**

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**Sent:** Mon, 9 May 2022 21:53:51 +0000  
**To:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Kelly, Bert (CDC/OD/OADC); Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
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**From:** Kelly, Bert (CDC/OD/OADC)  
**Sent:** Mon, 9 May 2022 22:22:41 +0000  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** RE: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

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**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 3:48 PM  
**To:** Pauley, Scott (CDC/OD/OADC) <[pvq2@cdc.gov](mailto:pvq2@cdc.gov)>  
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**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Tue, 10 May 2022 14:27:45 +0000  
**To:** Kelly, Bert (CDC/OD/OADC); Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Cc:** Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Strawn, Catherine (Cassie) (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD); Middlebrooks, Jennifer (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** RE: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Bert,

Here is our response.

When the 2020 Vital Statistics Data came out we made several changes to the fact sheet, including updating statistics, updating references, adding resources related to safe storage, and simplifying the text related to defensive gun use. In reviewing the fact sheet for updates, CDC scientists determined that the original text, which provided an estimate with a very wide range – between 60,000 and 2.5 million – could raise more questions than it answered, and needed to be edited for clarity. Because estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the questions asked, populations studied, timeframe, and other factors related to study design, and given the wide variability in previous estimates and the desire to keep the fact sheet short and succinct, it made the most sense to remove the numbers from the fact sheet and acknowledge that additional research is necessary to understand defensive gun use prevalence, frequency, circumstances, and outcomes.

Leading up to this decision, we had heard from a few members of the gun research community who expressed concern about the original fact sheet content. CDC always appreciates and welcomes feedback from partners.

---

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Yes, no rush.

Thx

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[Mobile Link](#) | [Details](#)

**Priority:** Normal

**Deadline DateTime:** 2022-05-09 18:00:00.0

**Summary:** Defensive gun use

**Status:** PO Review



**Media Outlet :** [TheTrace]

**Team:** Deputy Team

**Media Reporter:** Jennifer Mascia

**Email Address:**

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[@JenniferMascia](#)

**From:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Mon, 3 Jan 2022 13:22:01 +0000  
**To:** Dills, Jennifer (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Baynes, Amanda (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Jones, Aaron D. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** RE: Updates to FA Webpages: What's needed

Thank you, Jenny and Happy New Year!

Regarding the funding, this could be as simple as having a link to the larger funding page that acknowledges that other research also has relevance to preventing firearm-related injuries and deaths.

-Tom

---

**From:** Dills, Jennifer (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 29, 2021 3:35 PM  
**To:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Baynes, Amanda (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Jones, Aaron D. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** Updates to FA Webpages: What's needed

Hi Tom, Amanda, and Aaron –

I am VERY delayed in sending this email. I typed it all out and then realized it's been sitting in my drafts... Apologies!

Here is what we discussed in our meeting that will need updating in early 2022. Let me know if any of this is inconsistent with what you all heard.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Thanks, y'all!  
Jenny

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**Jenny Dills, MPH**

Division of Violence Prevention  
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

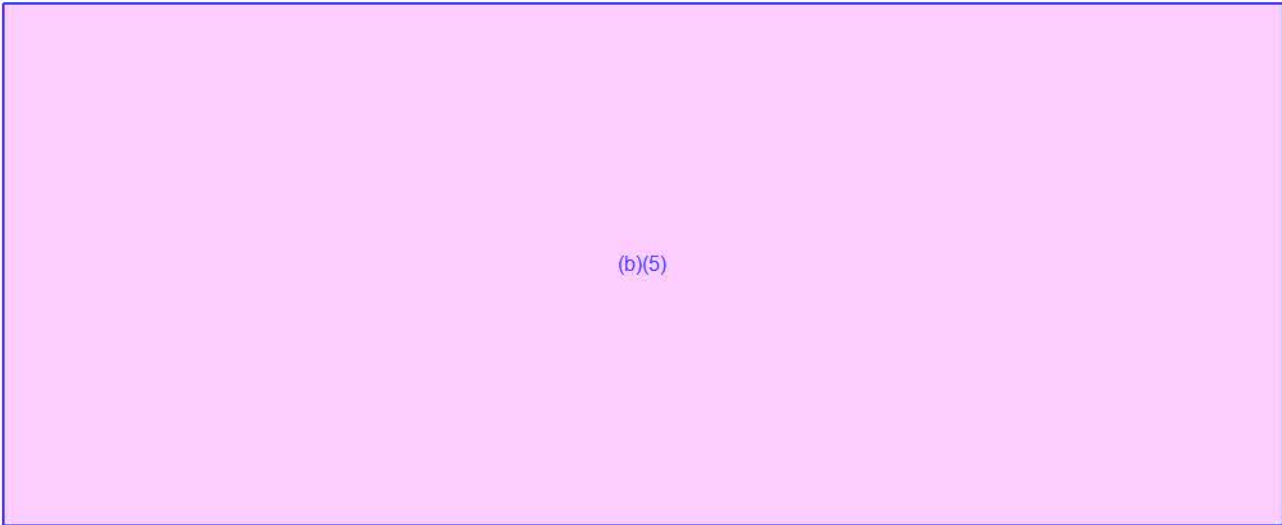
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**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** REVISED RE: FOR REVIEW and CLEARANCE FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Revised to include feedback from Tom and Deb H.

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 10, 2022 10:16 AM  
**To:** Massetti, Greta M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
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<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/firearms/fastfact.html>

## Firearm Violence Prevention

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## Firearm Violence Prevention

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**To:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Hi Tom,

Do we have any statistics on defensive use of firearms?

---

**From:** NMB Media Inquiry System (CDC) < >  
**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 3:48 PM  
**To:** Pauley, Scott (CDC/OD/OADC) < >  
**Subject:** Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Inquiry [MIS-131878](#) has been created and assigned to **Pauley, Scott (CDC/OD/OADC)** .

[Mobile Link](#) | [Details](#)

**Priority:** Normal

**Deadline DateTime:** 2022-05-09 18:00:00.0

**Summary:** Defensive gun use

**Status:** PO Review

**Media Outlet :** [TheTrace]

**Team:** Deputy Team

**Media Reporter:** Jennifer Mascia

**Email Address:** [jmascia@thetrace.org](mailto:jmascia@thetrace.org)

**Phone:**

**Inquiry Description:**

Hi there,

I'm a reporter at [The Trace](#), a nonprofit digital news outlet covering gun violence and policy. I hope this finds you, your family, and your colleagues in good health.

I'm working on a story about the frequency of defensive gun use. This figure has been hotly contested over the years and varies widely, with conservative estimates in the tens of thousands, while gun rights advocates embrace the higher figure of 2.5 million per year.

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Hope to talk soon!

Jennifer Mascia

—

Jennifer Mascia

News writer, [The Trace](#)

[@JenniferMascia](#)

**From:** Kelly, Bert (CDC/OD/OADC)  
**Sent:** Mon, 9 May 2022 21:03:42 +0000  
**To:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
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[Mobile Link](#) | [Details](#)

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Jennifer Mascia

—

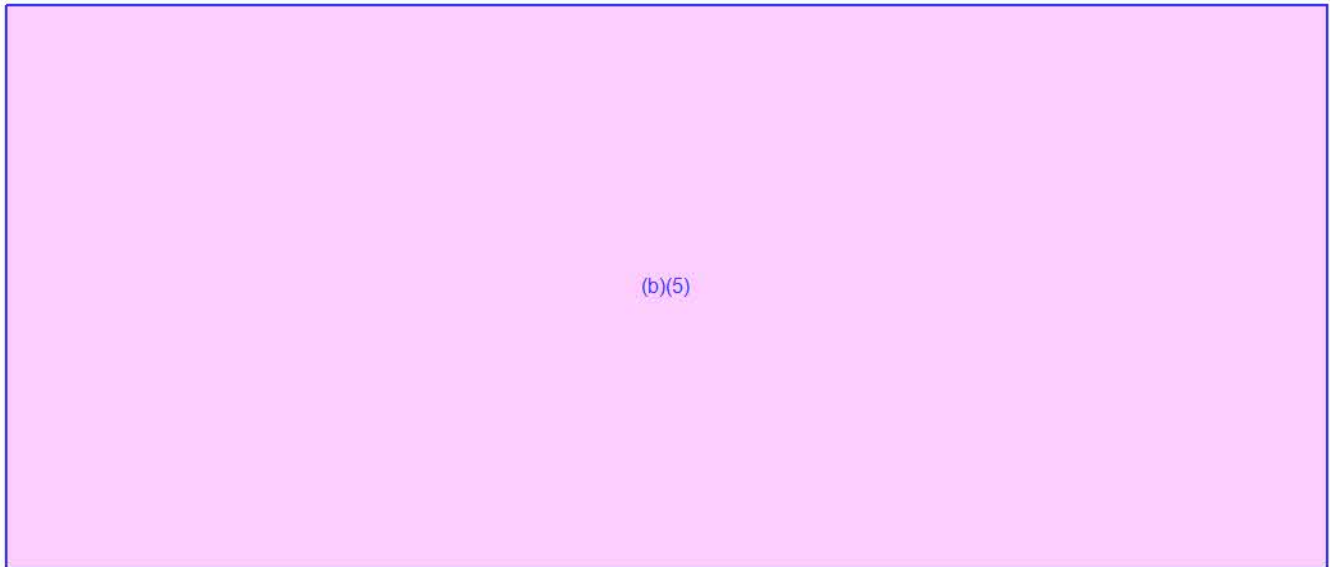
Jennifer Mascia

News writer, [The Trace](#)

[@JenniferMascia](#)

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Tue, 10 May 2022 14:16:06 +0000  
**To:** Massetti, Greta M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** FOR REVIEW and CLEARANCE FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Please see the proposed response to the media request from Trace. Tom has reviewed. Let me know if you agree. Thanks! -Beth



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**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 6:23 PM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Yes, no rush.

Thx

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 5:54 PM  
**To:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Kelly, Bert (CDC/OD/OADC) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Unless this reporter is on deadline, I will get something to you in the morning, Bert.

---

**From:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 5:52 PM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Kelly, Bert (CDC/OD/OADC) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Hi Beth,

Please see this request from the Trace. Bert, they are not asking for a number but rather for information about the change that was made when we updated the content on the fact sheet. We made several changes, including updating statistics, updating references, adding resources related to safe storage, and we simplified the text related to defensive gun use. The original text provided an estimate with a very wide range – between 60,000 and 2.5 million. It will be important to get Beth's perspective on this before answering.

-Tom

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**Subject:** Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Inquiry [MIS-131878](#) has been created and assigned to **Pauley, Scott (CDC/OD/OADC)** .

[Mobile Link](#) | [Details](#)

**Priority:** Normal

**Deadline DateTime:** 2022-05-09 18:00:00.0

**Summary:** Defensive gun use

**Status:** PO Review

**Media Outlet :** [TheTrace]



**Team:** Deputy Team

**Media Reporter:** Jennifer Mascia

**Email Address:**

**Phone:**

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Hope to talk soon!

Jennifer Mascia

—

Jennifer Mascia

News writer, [The Trace](#)

[@JenniferMascia](#)

**From:** Massetti, Greta M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Tue, 10 May 2022 14:25:52 +0000  
**To:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** Re: FOR REVIEW and CLEARANCE FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Me too  
Greta Massetti, PhD  
**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

**From:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 10, 2022 10:25:24 AM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Massetti, Greta M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: FOR REVIEW and CLEARANCE FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Looks good to me.

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) <ixn2@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 10, 2022 10:16 AM  
**To:** Massetti, Greta M. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) <ghz6@cdc.gov>; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) <jam2@cdc.gov>  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) <tgs9@cdc.gov>; Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) <zbr4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** FOR REVIEW and CLEARANCE FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

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(b)(5)

(b)(5)

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**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 6:23 PM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Yes, no rush.

Thx

---

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**Subject:** FW: Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

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**Sent:** Monday, May 9, 2022 3:48 PM  
**To:** Pauley, Scott (CDC/OD/OADC) <[redacted]>  
**Subject:** Issue (MIS-131878) Defensive gun use - NEW

Inquiry [MIS-131878](#) has been created and assigned to **Pauley, Scott (CDC/OD/OADC)** .

[Mobile Link](#) | [Details](#)

**Priority:** Normal

**Deadline DateTime:** 2022-05-09 18:00:00.0

**Summary:** Defensive gun use

**Status:** PO Review

**Media Outlet :** [TheTrace]

**Team:** Deputy Team

**Media Reporter:** Jennifer Mascia

**Email Address:**

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**Inquiry Description:**

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Hope to talk soon!

Jennifer Mascia

—

Jennifer Mascia

News writer, [The Trace](#)

[@JenniferMascia](#)

**From:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Mon, 27 Sep 2021 22:01:51 +0000  
**To:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** possible edit  
**Attachments:** Predecisional fs edit.docx

Hi Jim and Beth,

Here is a possible edit to our fact sheet for us to consider when we are ready to update the text.

-Tom



(b)(5)

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Thu, 9 Sep 2021 14:43:45 +0000  
**To:** Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD); Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

(b)(5)

---

**From:** Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 10:27 AM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR) < >  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Thanks Beth! When chatting with Deb, (b)(5)  
(b)(5). Let me know what you'd prefer!

Best,  
Melissa

**Melissa Podolsky, MPH**

Special Assistant to the Acting Principal Deputy Director (Detail)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 10:20 AM  
**To:** Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR) < >; Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Yes, please. Deb asked us to set up this call, and definitely wanted to be on it. So it should be me, Deb and Tom Simon. Looping in Deb's SA, Melissa, to put you in touch with Deb's scheduler. Thanks! -Beth

---

**From:** Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 10:11 AM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Good morning Beth,

I wanted to confirm if you would like Deb to attend this meeting.

Thanks,  
Shannon

---

**From:** Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 7, 2021 12:20 PM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hi Beth!

Po sent over availability below. September 15, 2:00 – 2:30 p.m. was the best option for everyone. I went ahead and sent out a calendar hold.

Deb wanted to know if you had a preference for her to attend or not.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks,  
Shannon

---

**From:** Po Murray < >  
**Sent:** Friday, September 3, 2021 7:13 AM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Cc:** Devin Hughes < >; Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR)  
< >;  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Good Morning Beth,

I am copying Mark Bryant from Gun Violence Archive, who is interested in joining the meeting.

We are available the following dates and times:

Thursday, September 9th 12-1pm & 4-6pm

Tuesday, September 14th 2-5pm

Wednesday, September 15th 12-2:30pm

Thanks so much.

Best Regards,  
Po Murray  
Chairwoman

Newtown Action Alliance  
Newtown Action Alliance Foundation  
[NewtownAction.org](http://NewtownAction.org)  
[P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470](mailto:NewtownAction.org)

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 2, 2021, at 5:23 PM, Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < > wrote:

Hi, Po and Devin. Kinzie and I have been in touch. My colleague, Shannon Smith, is copied on this email, and will work with Dr. Houry's scheduler to find a time that works for you. Could you please send us some dates and times in the next several weeks that would work for you? Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Beth

**Beth Reimels, JD**  
**Associate Director for Policy, Partnerships and Strategic Communication**  
**CDC | NCIPC | Division of Violence Prevention**

---

**From:** Po Murray < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 5:17 PM  
**To:** Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Cc:** Devin Hughes < >; Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >;  
Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hi Hannah,

Thanks so much for connecting us to Dr. Houry. I am moving you and Adrian to BCC to save your inbox.

Hello Dr Houry,

When we didn't hear back from anyone on this inquiry, I received Kinzie Lee's name from Senator Durbin's office and we reached out to her with the same inquiry this Wednesday. I am copying Kinzie so that we are all on the same page.

Thank you so much for your willingness to meet with us to discuss this matter.

Best Regards,  
Po Murray  
Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation  
[NewtownAction.org](http://NewtownAction.org)  
P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470

<image002.jpg>

On Thu, Sep 2, 2021 at 4:46 PM Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < > wrote:  
Hi Devin

We would be happy to meet virtually to discuss this research. I'm cc'ing Beth Reimels who is the policy lead in the Division of Violence Prevention who will reach out to get this set up and we will include some of our scientists

Thanks  
Deb

Deb Houry, MD, MPH  
Acting Principal Deputy Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

---

**From:** Devin Hughes < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 4:02 PM  
**To:** Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO < (b)(6) >  
**Cc:** Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >; Po Murray < >; Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO < (b)(6) >  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hannah and Dr. Houry,

Thank you for your response.

While I appreciate you taking the time to review and respond to my comments, I respectfully disagree with your assertion that: "The methodology used to capture defensive gun violence by the Gun Violence Archive represents a very small subset of people who have used guns defensively, and does not include individuals who might have used guns defensively, but not reported this use to law enforcement. e.g. a person who comes to the front porch with a gun to deter a stranger from trespassing on his/her property and then doesn't think anything of it when the stranger leaves the property."

This claim of "a very small subset" is factually inaccurate according to the very surveys cited to produce the range of defense gun uses on your fact sheet. The results produced by both the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) and Dr. Gary Kleck's surveys indicate that police were informed about the alleged DGU in more than 60% of



cases. Specifically, respondents to Kleck's survey, which found 2.5 million DGUs annually, indicate that police were informed of or found out about 64.2% of the respondents' alleged DGUs. This indicates empirical evidence of 1,605,000 DGUs should exist annually. Yet police and media reports collected by the Gun Violence Archive find fewer than 2,000 verified DGUs. Even assuming that only the 23.9% of cases where shots were fired (according to Kleck's survey) are recorded, that would still mean 597,500 cases, yet empirical evidence for only 0.3% of those actually exists.

Given that both the NCVS and small private surveys such as Kleck's explicitly reject the conclusion that "a very small subset" of people report DGUs to the police, this means one of two things:

1. The data from NCVS and Kleck's surveys is entirely wrong about people reporting incidents to the police, and it is in reality a small subset. This would inherently mean that if the surveys are wrong about such a large percentage of their respondents, there is no reason to treat the rest of the surveys' claims as accurate; or
2. The data from NCVS and Kleck's surveys is correct that more than 60% of people with a DGU report the incident to the police. If that reporting percentage is correct, then GVA should be capturing the majority of overall DGUs, which in turn means that the overall DGU numbers produced by NCVS and Kleck are vast overestimates.

Unless one suggests that GVA misses more than 90% of DGUs that are reported to the police -- even though no other researcher or organization has found more verified DGUs than GVA -- it is clear that the CDC Factsheet is citing inaccurate information.

These facts, along with the substantial academic literature pointing out the extreme risk of false positives outweighing false negatives in surveys of statistically rare events (a problem that is not exclusive to the topic of DGUs), should be sufficient to demonstrate the need for further contextualization. [Additional research](#) demonstrates that Kleck's surveys produce criminologically impossible results, and [similar surveys](#) indicate that a majority of self-reported DGUs in such surveys are likely illegal (and therefore not beneficial to society). Without acknowledging the sizable problems with survey-based DGU estimates, the DGU numbers alone are likely to promote a misleading narrative about the dangers versus benefits of firearm ownership.

I would strongly urge the CDC to consider revising the factsheet to add further context, or at the very least removing the DGU section until better data emerges. I would be more than happy to meet virtually to further discuss the research surrounding DGUs and how best to correct the misinformation in the Factsheet.

Best,  
Devin

On Wed, Sep 1, 2021 at 1:57 PM Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO  
wrote:  
Hi Devin and Po-

(b)(6)



Thank you for your patience. I shared your email with the CDC who shared this in response:

We appreciate this feedback. We've reviewed the materials and CDC's fact sheet notes that estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the data source, questions asked, populations studied, timeframes, and other factors related to the design of studies. Estimates from the Gun Violence Archive represent another data source and estimates based on that source will also vary from other estimates, especially from population-based surveys that gather information that may not ever be reported to official sources like law enforcement. The methodology used to capture defensive gun violence by the Gun Violence Archive represents a very small subset of people who have used guns defensively, and does not include individuals who might have used guns defensively, but not reported this use to law enforcement. e.g. a person who comes to the front porch with a gun to deter a stranger from trespassing on his/her property and then doesn't think anything of it when the stranger leaves the property. CDC reviewed many studies for the estimates used for this range in the fact sheet and an update is not warranted at this time. The President's Budget request asks for funding for firearm violence prevention which will facilitate data collection and research in these areas.

I am looping in Dr. Deb Houry from the CDC as well for any follow up.

Thank you!

--

Hannah Bristol (she/her)  
White House Office of Public Engagement

(b)(6)

[Sign Up for Updates from the Office of Public Engagement](#)

**From:** Devin Hughes < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 19, 2021 1:42 PM  
**To:** Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO < (b)(6) >  
**Cc:** Po Murray < >; Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO < (b)(6) >  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hi Hannah,

Nice to meet you as well. Just wanted to follow up on this to see if there is any additional information.

Many Thanks,  
Devin

On Fri, Aug 6, 2021, 2:34 PM Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO < (b)(6) > wrote:  
Thanks Po and nice to meet you Devin. I will reach out and circle back when I have more information.

--

Hannah Bristol (she/her)  
White House Office of Public Engagement

(b)(6)

| @HannahBristol46

[Sign Up for Updates from the Office of Public Engagement](#)

**From:** Po Murray <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 6, 2021 3:22 PM  
**To:** Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO <[REDACTED]>; Devin Hughes <[REDACTED]>; Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hello Adrian and Hannah,

Please e-meet Devin Hughes, founder of GVPedia. I am a board member of GVPedia and we were hoping to connect with a leader at CDC on this important issue that Devin has outlined in the e-mail below. Would you be able to connect us to the appropriate person from CDC?

Thank you in advance for your help.

Best Regards,  
Po Murray  
Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation  
NewtownAction.org  
P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Devin Hughes <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 2:44 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet  
**To:** Po Murray <[REDACTED]>

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Devin Hughes <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** Tue, Jul 6, 2021, 1:33 PM  
**Subject:** Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet  
**To:** <[Media@cdc.gov](mailto:Media@cdc.gov)>

Dear Director Bonds:

I'm writing to you today with a suggested revision to the Firearm Violence Prevention [fact sheet](#) on the CDC's website. I am the president and founder of GVPedia, a non-profit that provides access to gun violence research and data. Our mission is to ensure that policymakers have access to the most accurate, reliable, and up to date gun violence research.

Under the section of the fact sheet titled "What is defensive gun use? How often does it occur?" the following information is provided:

*"Although definitions of defensive gun use vary, it is generally defined as the use of a firearm to protect and defend one's self, family, others, and/or property against crime or victimization.*

*Estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the questions asked, populations studied, timeframe, and other factors related to the design of studies. The report [Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence](#) indicates a range of 60,000 to 2.5 million defensive gun uses each year."*

The 2.5 million figure cited by the fact sheet and the report referenced come from small private surveys conducted in the 1990s. These surveys came under intense academic scrutiny, which uncovered a number of fatal flaws in their methodology. Dr. David Hemewnay of Harvard University published *Survey Research and Self-Defense Gun Use: An Explanation of Extreme Overestimates* in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology that examines these surveys and explains the extreme overestimates. Further, the report referenced in the fact sheet, [Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence](#), was published in 2013, and therefore, does not include data from the Gun Violence Archive, the most widely accepted compendium of gun violence data. GVA started providing data in 2014, a year after the report was published. Data from the Gun Violence Archive indicates approximately 2,000 verified defensive gun uses annually. This data, based on police and media reports, is substantially lower than the estimates provided by private surveys (which estimate around 2.5 million) and the NCVS surveys (which estimate around 60,000).

Given the substantial concerns raised by academics about DGU survey results, and considering the new data from the Gun Violence Archive, we urge the CDC to revisit and update the DGU portion of the factsheet. People wishing to learn about gun violence rely on the CDC to provide accurate, up-to-date information. Citing figures based on decades-old, discredited surveys could produce a misleading picture of gun violence today. The public and policy makers need accurate data to make informed decisions.

GVPedia has compiled a factsheet highlighting the existing research and the flaws in the 2.5 million figure, which can be found [here](#). I've written extensively on the topic and would be more than happy to discuss this further, and/or provide further resources.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Devin Hughes, President & Founder



GVPedia

--

Devin L. Hughes, CFA  
Hughes Capital Management, LLC

(b)(6)

**From:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Thu, 16 Sep 2021 22:10:05 +0000  
**To:** Devin Hughes; Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR)  
**Cc:** Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD); ; Po Murray;  
Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD); Shell, Ursula (CDC/OD/OCS) (CTR); Reimels, Elizabeth  
(CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** RE: CDC/DVP and GVPedia

Hi Devin,

Thank you for sharing this. We also appreciate the opportunity to talk with you, Po, and Mark and the time that you put into the summary you provided.

-Tom

---

**From:** Devin Hughes <>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 16, 2021 1:10 PM  
**To:** Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR) <>  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) <>; Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <>; Po Murray <>; Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <>; Shell, Ursula (CDC/OD/OCS) (CTR) <>  
**Subject:** Re: CDC/DVP and GVPedia

Hi all,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. We deeply appreciate it. As promised, I've attached the slides I used, and the links on the final slide should provide a good starting point to expound further on the problems with the 2.5 million DGU estimate in particular. If there are any specific areas you would like me to send further information on, please don't hesitate to ask.

As Po mentioned during the call, I hope this is the beginning of the conversation.

Best,  
Devin

On Wed, Sep 15, 2021 at 11:31 AM Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR) <[fjn5@cdc.gov](mailto:fjn5@cdc.gov)> wrote:  
Agenda added.

---

**Purpose:** Discuss inaccurate defensive gun use in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

**Agenda**

Introductions (5 min)  
Discussion (25 min)

## Attendees

### CDC, Division of Violence Prevention:

Deb Houry, CDC Acting Principal Deputy Director

Tom Simon, Division of Violence Prevention, Associate Director of Science

Beth Reimels, Division of Violence Prevention, Associate Director for Policy, Partnerships, and Strategic Communication

### Partners

Devin Hughes, GVPedia President & Founder

Mark Bryant, CEO of the Gun Violence Archive

Po Murray, Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation

---

## Microsoft Teams meeting

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---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Wed, 15 Sep 2021 14:10:27 +0000  
**To:** Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR)  
**Subject:** RE: FOR REVIEW: CDC/DVP and GVPedia Meeting

Hey! Thanks for pulling this together – very helpful. I switched the order of the CDC people and added the location in the CDC section. Could you please add this revised agenda to the calendar invite? Thank you!

---

**From:** Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR) < >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021 9:56 AM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** FOR REVIEW: CDC/DVP and GVPedia Meeting

Good morning Beth,

I created the agenda below for today's meeting. Let me know if you'd like to add or updated anything below.

---

**Purpose:** Discuss inaccurate defensive gun use in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

**Agenda**

Introductions (5 min)  
Discussion (25 min)

**Attendees**

CDC, Division of Violence Prevention:

Deb Houry, CDC Acting Principal Deputy Director  
Tom Simon, Division of Violence Prevention, Associate Director of Science  
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Partners

Devin Hughes, GVPedia President & Founder  
Mark Bryant, CEO of the Gun Violence Archive  
Po Murray, Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation

**Shannon K. Smith, MSA**

TJFACT contractor  
DVP  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Fri, 17 Jun 2022 17:18:24 +0000  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD); ; Devin Hughes; Po Murray; ; Devin Hughes; Po Murray  
**Cc:** Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD); Shell, Ursula (CDC/OD/OCS) (CTR)  
**Subject:** CDC/DVP and GVPedia

Agenda added.

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**Purpose:** Discuss inaccurate defensive gun use in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet.

**Agenda**

Introductions (5 min)  
Discussion (25 min)

**Attendees**

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[Find a local number](#) | [Reset PIN](#)

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**From:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Thu, 9 Sep 2021 15:34:42 +0000  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** RE: Follow-up

Yes, but don't schedule around me. If I can make it fine, if not fine.

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 11:33 AM  
**To:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Follow-up

Got it. Do you want to be on the call with Deb and Tom? I was trying to protect your time, but if you want to continue to maintain the relationship with Mark, I can loop you in.

---

**From:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 11:25 AM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Follow-up

Yes that's him (Mark Bryant), but we met him on an entirely different matter. To use the GVA data in our effort to predict firearm homicides in real time given the lag in our data. He was very agreeable.

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 11:22 AM  
**To:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Follow-up

Who met with the CEO? He's asked to be part of this upcoming meeting too. See the attached. I don't want to be duplicative.

---

**From:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 11:16 AM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Follow-up

A few of just met with the CEO of the gun violence archive yesterday – Mark Bryant. (b)(5)  
(b)(5) Here's what we say on our fact sheet below – I mean all we say on the fact sheet essentially is that you get different estimates of defensive gun use depending on the methods you use to measure it and then point to the National Academy report. Hard to argue against that. What do you think the concern is with this? Or is it something else?

Although definitions of defensive gun use vary, it is generally defined as the use of a firearm to protect and defend one's self, family, others, and/or property against crime or victimization.

Estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the questions asked, populations studied, timeframe, and other factors related to the design of studies. The report [Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence](#) indicates a range of 60,000 to 2.5 million defensive gun uses each year.

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 10:56 AM  
**To:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Solhtalab, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Follow-up

The criticism of our defensive gun use data on our fact sheet from Debin Hughes the founder of GVPEdia / Gun Violence Archive and Newtown Action Alliance. We're setting up a call with them, Deb and Tom Simon at Deb's request. -B.

---

**From:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 10:52 AM  
**To:** Solhtalab, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Cc:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** Follow-up

Hi Elizabeth,

I was asking you if you were following up with that person Deb had referred to us. Just wanted to make sure we weren't supposed to do that.

Beth – what meeting were you talking about that Deb asked is to follow up on?

Jim

James A. Mercy, PhD  
Director  
Division of Violence Prevention  
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
MS S106-10  
4770 Buford Highway, NE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30341-3724







**From:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Tue, 30 Nov 2021 13:14:00 +0000  
**To:** Dills, Jennifer (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Cc:** Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Middlebrooks, Jennifer (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Kaigler, Alexis (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Menon, Akshara N. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** RE: heads-up updates to FA web content

Sounds good. Thank you, Jenny and Beth.

---

**From:** Dills, Jennifer (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Monday, November 29, 2021 10:34 AM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Middlebrooks, Jennifer (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Kaigler, Alexis (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Menon, Akshara N. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: heads-up updates to FA web content

Hi Beth,

This sounds great! I knew there was new data coming, so I was anticipating updates. I'll get something on the calendar ASAP.

Jenny

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Monday, November 29, 2021 9:55 AM  
**To:** Dills, Jennifer (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Santana, Alberto (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Middlebrooks, Jennifer (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Kaigler, Alexis (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Menon, Akshara N. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** heads-up updates to FA web content

Jenny,

I wanted to give you a heads up that Tom will be reaching out to you about some updates to the FA violence prevention website that we'll need to make in December/January for an anticipated update in early 2022. We are expecting updated NCHS data in December, and as a result there will be some edits to the fast facts page, and Tom has some additional edits to the funded research section to somehow include the work of one of the new YVPCs and one of the awardees for the Policy RO1. We'll need to think through how that content should be described and where it should live on the web since it is from a different funding lines. We should also check in to SB to see if they have any FASTER updates that need to be made. Could you please look for some time on Tom's calendar to get this ball rolling? Please include the web team as appropriate. Thanks!

Sincerely,

Beth

**Beth Reimels, JD**  
**Associate Director for Policy, Partnerships and Communication**  
**CDC | NCIPC | Division of Violence Prevention**

**From:** Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR)  
**Sent:** Thu, 9 Sep 2021 15:51:20 +0000  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** RE: Please add meeting to Partner Portal

Hi Beth,

Yes. I will add.

Shannon

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 11:36 AM  
**To:** Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR) < >  
**Subject:** Please add meeting to Partner Portal

Would you please add the meeting described below to the partner portal –

Topic covered - To use the GVA data in our effort to predict firearm homicides in real time given the lag in our data.

Organization and participants are highlighted below. Thanks!

---

**From:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 11:27 AM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Follow-up

It was me, Steve Sumner and Daniel Bowen.

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 11:22 AM  
**To:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Follow-up

Who met with the CEO? He's asked to be part of this upcoming meeting too. See the attached. I don't want to be duplicative.

---

**From:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 11:16 AM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Follow-up



A few of just met with the **CEO of the Gun Violence Archive yesterday – Mark Bryant**. Odd that they would be connected to the Newtown Action Alliance! Here's what we say on our fact sheet below – I mean all we say on the fact sheet essentially is that you get different estimates of defensive gun use depending on the methods you use to measure it and then point to the National Academy report. Hard to argue against that. What do you think the concern is with this? Or is it something else?

Although definitions of defensive gun use vary, it is generally defined as the use of a firearm to protect and defend one's self, family, others, and/or property against crime or victimization.

Estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the questions asked, populations studied, timeframe, and other factors related to the design of studies. The report [Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence](#) [external icon](#) indicates a range of 60,000 to 2.5 million defensive gun uses each year.

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 10:56 AM  
**To:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Solhtalab, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Subject:** RE: Follow-up

The criticism of our defensive gun use data on our fact sheet from Debin Hughes the founder of GVPedia / Gun Violence Archive and Newtown Action Alliance. We're setting up a call with them, Deb and Tom Simon at Deb's request. -B.

---

**From:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 10:52 AM  
**To:** Solhtalab, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Cc:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** Follow-up

Hi Elizabeth,

I was asking you if you were following up with that person Deb had referred to us. Just wanted to make sure we weren't supposed to do that.

Beth – what meeting were you talking about that Deb asked is to follow up on?

Jim

James A. Mercy, PhD  
Director  
Division of Violence Prevention  
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
MS S106-10  
4770 Buford Highway, NE

Atlanta, Georgia 30341-3724



**From:**  
**Sent:** Thu, 16 Sep 2021 23:38:20 -0400  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD)  
**Cc:** ; 'Devin Hughes'  
**Subject:** Response to CDC meeting with GVP representatives regarding Defensive Gun Use.

I would like to thank you for inviting me to provide input in this important conversation of the data behind Defensive Gun Use and taking the time to hear from those who are boots on the ground in Gun Violence Prevention. After the call I reviewed both the original documents that got everyone to the numbers being used to the origin of the collection of white papers.

One thing that popped out was that, even though it was not such, the numbers, specifically the 2.5 Million DGUs per year is considered CDC Gospel... it is in no uncertain terms a “CDC Study”. And while that very small study by Gary Kleck has been debunked repeatedly by everyone from all sides of this issue [even Kleck] it still remains canon by gun rights folks and their supporting politicians and is used as a blunt instrument against gun safety regulations every time there is a state or federal level hearing. Put simply, in the time that study has been published as “a CDC Study” gun violence prevention policy has ground to a halt, in no small part because of the misinformation that small study provided.

As I pointed out yesterday, we know GVA data is “light” regarding DGUs because there is a propensity to just not report incidents that don’t have someone shot or killed. So we end up with an unknown denominator in trying to calculate exactly how many there may be.

To that end, I would strongly recommend that one of two things occur with the CDC statement on Defensive Gun Use. Either remove the size estimates based on small surveys and clarify that there are an unknown number of DGU incidents based on personal reporting decisions of those who participated OR, remove the section altogether until valid numbers can be gleaned by peer reviews studies. In either case, that 2.5 Million number needs to be killed, buried, dug up, killed again and buried again. It is highly misleading, is used out of context and I honestly believe it has zero value – even as an outlier point in honest DGU discussions.

I would like to qualify my view with a bit of background. I have been a gun owner since Boy Scouts in the 1960s [acting as range safety officer at scout camps for five years] and began shooting at a garbage dump when I was 5 [not much else to do in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky back then]. I personally feel that nobody has the right to tell anyone else how to protect themselves or their families. While I personally think there are many better methods, American history puts the firearm as the “tool of the independent man” since it was invented. To that end, I have no issue with DGUs being part of the overall discussion of gun ownership, gun training, gun rights. But I also am an annoyingly picky data analyst and hate misleading extrapolations and champion proof.

Until proof is available we in the GVP community respectfully request that this outlier that has been used so often to stop legislation be removed until a panel can build a fair survey which will better reflect the true status of the number of DGUs. We all benefit from an honest, respected number.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to this important issue. Take care.

**Mark Bryant**  
**Executive Director**  
***Gun Violence Archive***

*[www.gunviolencearchive.org](http://www.gunviolencearchive.org)*

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Fri, 10 Dec 2021 19:50:39 +0000  
**To:** Devin Hughes  
**Cc:** ; Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD);  
**Subject:** RE: Response to CDC meeting with GVP representatives regarding Defensive Gun Use.

Devon,

Thanks so much for following-up, and my apologies for not getting back to you sooner. We are planning to update the fact sheet in early 2022 after the release of some new data. We will also make some edits to the content we discussed that I think will address the concerns you and other partners have raised. As soon as that update is complete, I will send you the link. Thanks for your partnership.

Sincerely,

Beth

**Beth Reimels, JD**  
**Associate Director for Policy, Partnerships and Communication**  
**CDC | NCIPC | Division of Violence Prevention**

---

**From:** Devin Hughes < >  
**Sent:** Friday, December 10, 2021 1:44 PM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Cc:** ; Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >;  
**Subject:** Re: Response to CDC meeting with GVP representatives regarding Defensive Gun Use.

Hi Beth,

I wanted to follow-up once more on our conversation about defensive gun use and see if there is anything more we can provide.

Best,  
Devin

On Fri, Oct 22, 2021 at 12:09 PM Devin Hughes < > wrote:  
Hi Beth,

Just wanted to follow-up to see if there is anything further we can provide.



Best,  
Devin

On Mon, Sep 27, 2021 at 8:41 AM Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < > wrote:  
Thanks, Mark. Apologies for my late response. We appreciate you raising this issue with us, these suggestions, and the follow-up information. We have shared your concerns with our senior scientists for their consideration, and will be in touch later this fall to follow-up.

Sincerely,

Beth

**Beth Reimels, JD**  
**Associate Director for Policy, Partnerships and Strategic Communication**  
**CDC | NCIPC | Division of Violence Prevention**

---

**From:** < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 16, 2021 11:38 PM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Cc:** 'Devin Hughes' < >  
**Subject:** Response to CDC meeting with GVP representatives regarding Defensive Gun Use.

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**Mark Bryant**  
**Executive Director**  
***Gun Violence Archive***

[www.gunviolencearchive.org](http://www.gunviolencearchive.org)



**From:** Devin Hughes  
**Sent:** Fri, 10 Dec 2021 12:44:01 -0600  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Cc:** ; Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD);  
**Subject:** Re: Response to CDC meeting with GVP representatives regarding Defensive Gun Use.

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Best,  
Devin

On Mon, Sep 27, 2021 at 8:41 AM Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < > wrote:

Thanks, Mark. Apologies for my late response. We appreciate you raising this issue with us, these suggestions, and the follow-up information. We have shared your concerns with our senior scientists for their consideration, and will be in touch later this fall to follow-up.

Sincerely,

Beth

**Beth Reimels, JD**

**Associate Director for Policy, Partnerships and Strategic Communication**

---

**From:** < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 16, 2021 11:38 PM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Cc:** < >; 'Devin Hughes' < >  
**Subject:** Response to CDC meeting with GVP representatives regarding Defensive Gun Use.

I would like to thank you for inviting me to provide input in this important conversation of the data behind Defensive Gun Use and taking the time to hear from those who are boots on the ground in Gun Violence Prevention. After the call I reviewed both the original documents that got everyone to the numbers being used to the origin of the collection of white papers.

One thing that popped out was that, even though it was not such, the numbers, specifically the 2.5 Million DGUs per year is considered CDC Gospel... it is in no uncertain terms a “CDC Study”. And while that very small study by Gary Kleck has been debunked repeatedly by everyone from all sides of this issue [even Kleck] it still remains canon by gun rights folks and their supporting politicians and is used as a blunt instrument against gun safety regulations every time there is a state or federal level hearing. Put simply, in the time that study has been published as “a CDC Study” gun violence prevention policy has ground to a halt, in no small part because of the misinformation that small study provided.

As I pointed out yesterday, we know GVA data is “light” regarding DGUs because there is a propensity to just not report incidents that don’t have someone shot or killed. So we end up with an unknown denominator in trying to calculate exactly how many there may be.

To that end, I would strongly recommend that one of two things occur with the CDC statement on Defensive Gun Use. Either remove the size estimates based on small surveys and clarify that there are an unknown number of DGU incidents based on personal reporting decisions of those who participated OR, remove the section altogether until valid numbers can be gleaned by peer reviews studies. In either case, that 2.5 Million number needs to be killed, buried, dug up, killed again and buried again. It is highly misleading, is used out of context and I honestly believe it has zero value – even as an outlier point in honest DGU discussions.

I would like to qualify my view with a bit of background. I have been a gun owner since Boy

Scouts in the 1960s [acting as range safety officer at scout camps for five years] and began shooting at a garbage dump when I was 5 [not much else to do in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky back then]. I personally feel that nobody has the right to tell anyone else how to protect themselves or their families. While I personally think there are many better methods, American history puts the firearm as the “tool of the independent man” since it was invented. To that end, I have no issue with DGUs being part of the overall discussion of gun ownership, gun training, gun rights. But I also am an annoyingly picky data analyst and hate misleading extrapolations and champion proof.

Until proof if available we in the GVP community respectfully request that this outlier that has been used so often to stop legislation be removed until a panel can build a fair survey which will better reflect the true status of the number of DGUs. We all benefit from an honest, respected number.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to this important issue. Take care.

**Mark Bryant**  
**Executive Director**  
*Gun Violence Archive*

[www.gunviolencearchive.org](http://www.gunviolencearchive.org)

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Thu, 2 Sep 2021 21:25:49 +0000  
**To:** Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR)  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Dahlberg, Linda L. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** ACTION Please schedule this call - FW: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Shannon,

When you hear back from Po and Devin, could you please work with Melissa Podolsky (Deb Houry's SA) to find a time to schedule a zoom call with Deb, myself, and Tom Simon? Copying Jim, Linda and Tom for awareness. Thanks!

Sincerely,

Beth

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**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 5:24 PM  
**To:** Po Murray < >  
**Cc:** Devin Hughes < >; Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hi, Po and Devin. Kinzie and I have been in touch. My colleague, Shannon Smith, is copied on this email, and will work with Dr. Houry's scheduler to find a time that works for you. Could you please send us some dates and times in the next several weeks that would work for you? Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Beth

**Beth Reimels, JD**  
Associate Director for Policy, Partnerships and Strategic Communication  
CDC | NCIPC | Division of Violence Prevention

---

**From:** Po Murray < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 5:17 PM  
**To:** Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Cc:** Devin Hughes < >; Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >;



Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hi Hannah,

Thanks so much for connecting us to Dr. Houry. I am moving you and Adrian to BCC to save your inbox.

Hello Dr Houry,

When we didn't hear back from anyone on this inquiry, I received Kinzie Lee's name from Senator Durbin's office and we reached out to her with the same inquiry this Wednesday. I am copying Kinzie so that we are all on the same page.

Thank you so much for your willingness to meet with us to discuss this matter.

Best Regards,

Po Murray

Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation

[NewtownAction.org](http://NewtownAction.org)

P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470



On Thu, Sep 2, 2021 at 4:46 PM Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < > wrote:

Hi Devin

We would be happy to meet virtually to discuss this research. I'm cc'ing Beth Reimels who is the policy lead in the Division of Violence Prevention who will reach out to get this set up and we will include some of our scientists

Thanks

Deb

Deb Houry, MD, MPH

Acting Principal Deputy Director

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

---

**From:** Devin Hughes < >

**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 4:02 PM

**To:** Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO < (b)(6) >

**Cc:** Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >; Po Murray

<

>; Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO < [REDACTED] (b)(6) >

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hannah and Dr. Houry,

Thank you for your response.

While I appreciate you taking the time to review and respond to my comments, I respectfully disagree with your assertion that: “The methodology used to capture defensive gun violence by the Gun Violence Archive represents a very small subset of people who have used guns defensively, and does not include individuals who might have used guns defensively, but not reported this use to law enforcement. e.g. a person who comes to the front porch with a gun to deter a stranger from trespassing on his/her property and then doesn’t think anything of it when the stranger leaves the property.”

This claim of “a very small subset” is factually inaccurate according to the very surveys cited to produce the range of defense gun uses on your fact sheet. The results produced by both the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) and Dr. Gary Kleck’s surveys indicate that police were informed about the alleged DGU in more than 60% of cases. Specifically, respondents to Kleck’s survey, which found 2.5 million DGUs annually, indicate that police were informed of or found out about 64.2% of the respondents’ alleged DGUs. This indicates empirical evidence of 1,605,000 DGUs should exist annually. Yet police and media reports collected by the Gun Violence Archive find fewer than 2,000 verified DGUs. Even assuming that only the 23.9% of cases where shots were fired (according to Kleck’s survey) are recorded, that would still mean 597,500 cases, yet empirical evidence for only 0.3% of those actually exists.

Given that both the NCVS and small private surveys such as Kleck’s explicitly reject the conclusion that “a very small subset” of people report DGUs to the police, this means one of two things:

1. The data from NCVS and Kleck’s surveys is entirely wrong about people reporting incidents to the police, and it is in reality a small subset. This would inherently mean that if the surveys are wrong about such a large percentage of their respondents, there is no reason to treat the rest of the surveys’ claims as accurate; or
2. The data from NCVS and Kleck’s surveys is correct that more than 60% of people with a DGU report the incident to the police. If that reporting percentage is correct, then GVA should be capturing the majority of overall DGUs, which in turn means that the overall DGU numbers produced by NCVS and Kleck are vast overestimates.

Unless one suggests that GVA misses more than 90% of DGUs that are reported to the police -- even though no other researcher or organization has found more verified DGUs than GVA -- it is clear that the CDC Factsheet is citing inaccurate information.

These facts, along with the substantial academic literature pointing out the extreme risk of false positives outweighing false negatives in surveys of statistically rare events (a



problem that is not exclusive to the topic of DGUs), should be sufficient to demonstrate the need for further contextualization. [Additional research](#) demonstrates that Kleck's surveys produce criminologically impossible results, and [similar surveys](#) indicate that a majority of self-reported DGUs in such surveys are likely illegal (and therefore not beneficial to society). Without acknowledging the sizable problems with survey-based DGU estimates, the DGU numbers alone are likely to promote a misleading narrative about the dangers versus benefits of firearm ownership.

I would strongly urge the CDC to consider revising the factsheet to add further context, or at the very least removing the DGU section until better data emerges. I would be more than happy to meet virtually to further discuss the research surrounding DGUs and how best to correct the misinformation in the Factsheet.

Best,  
Devin

On Wed, Sep 1, 2021 at 1:57 PM Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO wrote:  
Hi Devin and Po-

(b)(6)

Thank you for your patience. I shared your email with the CDC who shared this in response:

We appreciate this feedback. We've reviewed the materials and CDC's fact sheet notes that estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the data source, questions asked, populations studied, timeframes, and other factors related to the design of studies. Estimates from the Gun Violence Archive represent another data source and estimates based on that source will also vary from other estimates, especially from population-based surveys that gather information that may not ever be reported to official sources like law enforcement. The methodology used to capture defensive gun violence by the Gun Violence Archive represents a very small subset of people who have used guns defensively, and does not include individuals who might have used guns defensively, but not reported this use to law enforcement. e.g. a person who comes to the front porch with a gun to deter a stranger from trespassing on his/her property and then doesn't think anything of it when the stranger leaves the property. CDC reviewed many studies for the estimates used for this range in the fact sheet and an update is not warranted at this time. The President's Budget request asks for funding for firearm violence prevention which will facilitate data collection and research in these areas.

I am looping in Dr. Deb Houry from the CDC as well for any follow up.

Thank you!

--

Hannah Bristol (she/her)  
White House Office of Public Engagement

(b)(6)

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**From:** Devin Hughes <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 19, 2021 1:42 PM  
**To:** Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Po Murray <[REDACTED]>; Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hi Hannah,

Nice to meet you as well. Just wanted to follow up on this to see if there is any additional information.

Many Thanks,  
Devin

On Fri, Aug 6, 2021, 2:34 PM Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED] wrote:  
Thanks Po and nice to meet you Devin. I will reach out and circle back when I have more information.

--

Hannah Bristol (she/her)  
White House Office of Public Engagement

[REDACTED]

[Sign Up for Updates from the Office of Public Engagement](#)

**From:** Po Murray <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 6, 2021 3:22 PM  
**To:** Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]; Devin Hughes <[REDACTED]>; Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hello Adrian and Hannah,

Please e-meet Devin Hughes, founder of GVPedia. I am a board member of GVPedia and we were hoping to connect with a leader at CDC on this important issue that Devin has outlined in the e-mail below. Would you be able to connect us to the appropriate person from CDC?

Thank you in advance for your help.

Best Regards,  
Po Murray  
Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation  
NewtownAction.org  
P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Devin Hughes <(b)(6)>  
Date: Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 2:44 PM  
Subject: Fwd: Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet  
To: Po Murray <>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Devin Hughes <(b)(6)>  
Date: Tue, Jul 6, 2021, 1:33 PM  
Subject: Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet  
To: <[Media@cdc.gov](mailto:Media@cdc.gov)>

Dear Director Bonds:

I'm writing to you today with a suggested revision to the Firearm Violence Prevention [fact sheet](#) on the CDC's website. I am the president and founder of GVPedia, a non-profit that provides access to gun violence research and data. Our mission is to ensure that policymakers have access to the most accurate, reliable, and up to date gun violence research.

Under the section of the fact sheet titled "What is defensive gun use? How often does it occur?" the following information is provided:

*"Although definitions of defensive gun use vary, it is generally defined as the use of a firearm to protect and defend one's self, family, others, and/or property against crime or victimization.*

*Estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the questions asked, populations studied, timeframe, and other factors related to the design of studies. The report [Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence](#) indicates a range of 60,000 to 2.5 million defensive gun uses each year."*

The 2.5 million figure cited by the fact sheet and the report referenced come from small private surveys conducted in the 1990s. These surveys came under intense academic scrutiny, which uncovered a number of fatal flaws in their methodology. Dr. David Hemewnay of Harvard University published *Survey Research and Self-Defense Gun Use: An Explanation of Extreme Overestimates* in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology that examines these surveys and explains the extreme overestimates. Further, the report referenced in the fact sheet, [Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence](#), was published in 2013, and therefore, does not include data from the Gun Violence Archive, the most widely accepted compendium of gun violence data. GVA started providing data in 2014, a year after the report was published. Data from the Gun Violence Archive indicates approximately 2,000 verified defensive gun uses annually. This data, based on police and media reports, is

substantially lower than the estimates provided by private surveys (which estimate around 2.5 million) and the NCVS surveys (which estimate around 60,000).

Given the substantial concerns raised by academics about DGU survey results, and considering the new data from the Gun Violence Archive, we urge the CDC to revisit and update the DGU portion of the factsheet. People wishing to learn about gun violence rely on the CDC to provide accurate, up-to-date information. Citing figures based on decades-old, discredited surveys could produce a misleading picture of gun violence today. The public and policy makers need accurate data to make informed decisions.

GVPedia has compiled a factsheet highlighting the existing research and the flaws in the 2.5 million figure, which can be found [here](#). I've written extensively on the topic and would be more than happy to discuss this further, and/or provide further resources.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Devin Hughes, President & Founder

GVPedia

--

Devin L. Hughes, CFA  
Hughes Capital Management, LLC

(b)(6)



**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Mon, 13 Sep 2021 19:47:53 +0000  
**To:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** RE: ACTION Please schedule this call - FW: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Sounds good.

---

**From:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Monday, September 13, 2021 12:43 PM  
**To:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** FW: ACTION Please schedule this call - FW: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

This is the topic for the meeting I just scheduled for 11:00 tomorrow. I think we'll only need 15 minutes.

Thank you,

-Tom

---

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 5:26 PM  
**To:** Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR) < >  
**Cc:** Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Dahlberg, Linda L. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
**Subject:** ACTION Please schedule this call - FW: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Shannon,

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Sincerely,

Beth

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**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 5:24 PM  
**To:** Po Murray < >  
**Cc:** Devin Hughes < >; Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR) < >

**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

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CDC | NCIPC | Division of Violence Prevention

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Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

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Thanks

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Deb Houry, MD, MPH  
Acting Principal Deputy Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

---

**From:** Devin Hughes <[redacted]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 4:02 PM  
**To:** Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO <[redacted] (b)(6)>  
**Cc:** Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <[redacted]>; Po Murray <[redacted]>; Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO <[redacted] (b)(6)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hannah and Dr. Houry,

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Thank you!

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Hannah Bristol (she/her)  
White House Office of Public Engagement

(b)(6)

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**From:** Devin Hughes < >

**Sent:** Thursday, August 19, 2021 1:42 PM

**To:** Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO < (b)(6) >

**Cc:** Po Murray < >; Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO < (b)(6) >

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

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Hannah Bristol (she/her)  
White House Office of Public Engagement

(b)(6)

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**From:** Po Murray < >

**Sent:** Friday, August 6, 2021 3:22 PM

**To:** Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO <(b)(6)> Devin Hughes  
<>; Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO <(b)(6)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

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Po Murray  
Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation  
NewtownAction.org  
P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Devin Hughes <(b)(6)>  
**Date:** Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 2:44 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet  
**To:** Po Murray <>

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Devin Hughes <(b)(6)>  
**Date:** Tue, Jul 6, 2021, 1:33 PM  
**Subject:** Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet  
**To:** <[Media@cdc.gov](mailto:Media@cdc.gov)>

Dear Director Bonds:

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*"Although definitions of defensive gun use vary, it is generally defined as the use of a firearm to protect and defend one's self, family, others, and/or property against crime or victimization.*

*Estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the questions asked, populations studied, timeframe, and other factors related to the design of studies. The report [Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence](#) indicates a range of 60,000 to 2.5 million defensive gun uses each year."*

The 2.5 million figure cited by the fact sheet and the report referenced come from small private surveys conducted in the 1990s. These surveys came under intense academic scrutiny, which uncovered a number of fatal flaws in their methodology. Dr. David Hemewnay of Harvard University published *Survey Research and Self-Defense Gun Use: An Explanation of Extreme Overestimates* in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology that examines these surveys and explains the extreme overestimates. Further, the report referenced in the fact sheet, [Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence](#), was published in 2013, and therefore, does not include data from the Gun Violence Archive, the most widely accepted compendium of gun violence data. GVA started providing data in 2014, a year after the report was published. Data from the Gun Violence Archive indicates approximately 2,000 verified defensive gun uses annually. This data, based on police and media reports, is substantially lower than the estimates provided by private surveys (which estimate around 2.5 million) and the NCVS surveys (which estimate around 60,000).

Given the substantial concerns raised by academics about DGU survey results, and considering the new data from the Gun Violence Archive, we urge the CDC to revisit and update the DGU portion of the factsheet. People wishing to learn about gun violence rely on the CDC to provide accurate, up-to-date information. Citing figures based on decades-old, discredited surveys could produce a misleading picture of gun violence today. The public and policy makers need accurate data to make informed decisions.

GVPedia has compiled a factsheet highlighting the existing research and the flaws in the 2.5 million figure, which can be found [here](#). I've written extensively on the topic and would be more than happy to discuss this further, and/or provide further resources.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Devin Hughes, President & Founder

GVPedia

--

Devin L. Hughes, CFA  
Hughes Capital Management, LLC

(b)(6)



**From:** Dahlberg, Linda L. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Tue, 31 Aug 2021 18:31:19 +0000  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** Estimates vary

Hi Beth,

We stand behind our fact sheet, which essentially points out that estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the data source, questions asked, populations studied, timeframes, and other factors related to the design of studies. Estimates from the Gun Violence Archive represent another source and estimates based on that source will also vary from other estimates, especially from population-based surveys that gather information that may not ever be reported to official sources like law enforcement.

Examples of studies conducted over the years:

- Cook, Philip J. and Jens Ludwig, "Defensive Gun Uses: New Evidence from a National Survey," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1998, pp. 111–131.
- Cramer, Clayton E., "Why the FBI's Justifiable Homicide Statistics Are a Misleading Measure of Defensive Gun Use," *University of Florida Journal of Law and Public Policy*, Vol. 27, 2016, pp. 505–514.
- Duncan, Otis D., "As Compared to What? Offensive and Defensive Gun Use Surveys, 1973–1994", Rockville, Md.: National Institute of Justice, working paper 185056, 2000a.
- Hemenway, David and Deborah Azrael, "The Relative Frequency of Offensive and Defensive Gun Uses: Results from a National Survey," *Violence and Victims*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 2000, pp. 257–272.
- Hemenway, David, "Survey Research and Self-Defense Gun Use: An Explanation of Extreme Overestimates," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, Vol. 87, No. 4, 1997, pp. 1430–1445.
- Hemenway, David, and Sara J. Solnick, "The Epidemiology of Self-Defense Gun Use: Evidence from the National Crime Victimization Surveys 2007–2011," *Preventive Medicine*, Vol. 79, 2015b, pp. 22–27.
- Ikeda RM, Dahlberg LL, Sacks JJ, Mercy JA, Powell KE. "Estimating intruder-related firearm retrievals in US households, 1994". *Violence and Victims* 1997; 12(4):363–372.
- Kleck, Gary, "Response Errors in Surveys of Defensive Gun Use: A National Internet Survey Experiment," *Crime and Delinquency*, Vol. 64, No. 9, 2018, pp. 1119–1142.
- Kleck G and Gertz M. "Armed resistance to crime: the prevalence and nature of self-defense with a gun." *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 1995; 86:143–86.
- Ludwig, Jens, "Gun Self-Defense and Deterrence," *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*, Vol. 27, 2000, pp. 363–417.
- McDowall, D. and B. Wiersema, "The Incidence of Defensive Firearm Use by U.S. Crime Victims, 1987 Through 1990," *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 84, No. 12, 1994, pp. 1982–1984.
- Schnebly, Stephen M., "An Examination of the Impact of Victim, Offender, and Situational Attributes on the Deterrent Effect of Defensive Gun Use: A Research Note," *Justice Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2002, pp. 377–398.
- Violence Policy Center, "Firearm Justifiable Homicides and Non-Fatal Self-Defense Gun Use: An Analysis of Federal Bureau of Investigation and National Crime Victimization Survey Data", Washington, D.C., September 2018.

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thu, 16 Sep 2021 23:50:58 -0400  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD)  
**Cc:** ; 'Devin Hughes'  
**Subject:** JPG of Google results regarding the "CDC Study" on DGUs  
**Attachments:** Kleck CDC first returns.png

I meant to include this in my previous note. I did a quick internet search with the terms [Gary Kleck CDC] and this was the first set of returns.

**Mark Bryant**  
**Executive Director**  
***Gun Violence Archive***

[www.gunviolencearchive.org](http://www.gunviolencearchive.org)

gary kleck cdc



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### ► Unpublished CDC Study Confirms More than 2 Million ...

Estimated Reading Time: 3 mins

An unpublished Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study confirms Florida State University criminologist **Gary Kleck's** findings of more than two million defensive handgun uses (DGUs) per year. Since the early 1990s, Kleck has maintained that there is a minimum of 760,000 DGUs annually. However, that is his low estimate.

<https://www.lawenforcementtoday.com/unpublished...> ▾

### CDC Study Confirmed Kleck's 2.5 Million Defensive Gun Use ...

<https://www.thetruthaboutguns.com/cdc-study...> ▾

Apr 21, 2018 · The paper discussed in this post below has been withdrawn by the author **Gary Kleck** after Reason brought to his attention an important detail first pointed out by Robert VerBruggen of National Review: Kleck in the original paper treats the CDC's surveys on defensive gun use as if they were national in scope, as Kleck's original survey was, but they were not.

Estimated Reading Time: 6 mins

### People also ask

When did the Kleck and Gertz NSD come out? ▾

When was the last time the CDC did a study? ▾

When did the CDC start asking about DGUs? ▾

When did the CDC start asking about defensive gun use? ▾

Feedback

### A Second Look at a Controversial Study About Defensive Gun ...

<https://reason.com/2018/09/04/what-the-cdcs-mid-90s-surveys-on-defensi> ▾

Sep 04, 2018 · Criminologist **Gary Kleck** revises his paper on the incidence of the use of firearms for self-protection.

Estimated Reading Time: 8 mins

### That Time The CDC Asked About Defensive Gun Uses

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/paulhsieh/2018/04/30/...> ▾

Apr 30, 2018 · **Kleck** looked at some previously unpublished results from the CDC surveys conducted in the 1990s and concluded: In 1996, 1997, and 1998, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ...

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Estimated Reading Time: 6 mins

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Estimated Reading Time: 7 mins

**From:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Sent:** Mon, 27 Sep 2021 13:16:54 +0000  
**To:** Mercy, James (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Subject:** FW: JPG of Google results regarding the "CDC Study" on DGUs  
**Attachments:** Kleck CDC first returns.png

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**From:** mark@gva.us.com <mark@gva.us.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 16, 2021 11:51 PM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) <ixn2@cdc.gov>; Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) <tgs9@cdc.gov>; Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) <vjz7@cdc.gov>  
**Cc:** pmurray@newtownaction.org; 'Devin Hughes' <devin@gvpedia.org>  
**Subject:** JPG of Google results regarding the "CDC Study" on DGUs

I meant to include this in my previous note. I did a quick internet search with the terms [Gary Kleck CDC] and this was the first set of returns.

**Mark Bryant**  
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gary kleck cdc



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Estimated Reading Time: 7 mins

**From:** Po Murray  
**Sent:** Fri, 3 Sep 2021 07:13:00 -0400  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP)  
**Cc:** Devin Hughes; Smith, Shannon K. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR);  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Good Morning Beth,

I am copying Mark Bryant from Gun Violence Archive, who is interested in joining the meeting.

We are available the following dates and times:

Thursday, September 9th 12-1pm & 4-6pm

Tuesday, September 14th 2-5pm

Wednesday, September 15th 12-2:30pm

Thanks so much.

Best Regards,  
Po Murray  
Chairwoman  
Newtown Action Alliance  
Newtown Action Alliance Foundation  
[NewtownAction.org](http://NewtownAction.org)  
[P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470](mailto:NewtownAction.org)

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 2, 2021, at 5:23 PM, Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >  
wrote:

Hi, Po and Devin. Kinzie and I have been in touch. My colleague, Shannon Smith, is copied on this email, and will work with Dr. Houry's scheduler to find a time that works for you. Could you please send us some dates and times in the next several weeks that would work for you? Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Beth

**Beth Reimels, JD**



Associate Director for Policy, Partnerships and Strategic Communication  
CDC | NCIPC | Division of Violence Prevention

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**From:** Po Murray < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 5:17 PM  
**To:** Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Cc:** Devin Hughes < >; Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >;  
Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hi Hannah,

Thanks so much for connecting us to Dr. Houry. I am moving you and Adrian to BCC to save your inbox.

Hello Dr Houry,

When we didn't hear back from anyone on this inquiry, I received Kinzie Lee's name from Senator Durbin's office and we reached out to her with the same inquiry this Wednesday. I am copying Kinzie so that we are all on the same page.

Thank you so much for your willingness to meet with us to discuss this matter.

Best Regards,

Po Murray

Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation

[NewtownAction.org](http://NewtownAction.org)

P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470

<image002.jpg>

On Thu, Sep 2, 2021 at 4:46 PM Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < > wrote:

Hi Devin

We would be happy to meet virtually to discuss this research. I'm cc'ing Beth Reimels who is the policy lead in the Division of Violence Prevention who will reach out to get this set up and we will include some of our scientists

Thanks

Deb

Deb Houry, MD, MPH

Acting Principal Deputy Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

---

**From:** Devin Hughes < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 4:02 PM  
**To:** Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO < (b)(6) >  
**Cc:** Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >; Po Murray < >; Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO < (b)(6) >  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hannah and Dr. Houry,

Thank you for your response.

While I appreciate you taking the time to review and respond to my comments, I respectfully disagree with your assertion that: “The methodology used to capture defensive gun violence by the Gun Violence Archive represents a very small subset of people who have used guns defensively, and does not include individuals who might have used guns defensively, but not reported this use to law enforcement. e.g. a person who comes to the front porch with a gun to deter a stranger from trespassing on his/her property and then doesn’t think anything of it when the stranger leaves the property.”

This claim of “a very small subset” is factually inaccurate according to the very surveys cited to produce the range of defense gun uses on your fact sheet. The results produced by both the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) and Dr. Gary Kleck’s surveys indicate that police were informed about the alleged DGU in more than 60% of cases. Specifically, respondents to Kleck’s survey, which found 2.5 million DGUs annually, indicate that police were informed of or found out about 64.2% of the respondents’ alleged DGUs. This indicates empirical evidence of 1,605,000 DGUs should exist annually. Yet police and media reports collected by the Gun Violence Archive find fewer than 2,000 verified DGUs. Even assuming that only the 23.9% of cases where shots were fired (according to Kleck’s survey) are recorded, that would still mean 597,500 cases, yet empirical evidence for only 0.3% of those actually exists.

Given that both the NCVS and small private surveys such as Kleck’s explicitly reject the conclusion that “a very small subset” of people report DGUs to the police, this means one of two things:

1. The data from NCVS and Kleck’s surveys is entirely wrong about people reporting incidents to the police, and it is in reality a small subset. This would inherently mean that if the surveys are wrong about such a large percentage of their respondents, there is no reason to treat the rest of the surveys’ claims as accurate; or
2. The data from NCVS and Kleck’s surveys is correct that more than 60% of people with a DGU report the incident to the police. If that reporting percentage is correct, then GVA should be capturing the majority of overall DGUs, which in turn means that the overall DGU numbers produced by NCVS and Kleck are vast overestimates.



Unless one suggests that GVA misses more than 90% of DGUs that are reported to the police -- even though no other researcher or organization has found more verified DGUs than GVA -- it is clear that the CDC Factsheet is citing inaccurate information.

These facts, along with the substantial academic literature pointing out the extreme risk of false positives outweighing false negatives in surveys of statistically rare events (a problem that is not exclusive to the topic of DGUs), should be sufficient to demonstrate the need for further contextualization. [Additional research](#) demonstrates that Kleck's surveys produce criminologically impossible results, and [similar surveys](#) indicate that a majority of self-reported DGUs in such surveys are likely illegal (and therefore not beneficial to society). Without acknowledging the sizable problems with survey-based DGU estimates, the DGU numbers alone are likely to promote a misleading narrative about the dangers versus benefits of firearm ownership.

I would strongly urge the CDC to consider revising the factsheet to add further context, or at the very least removing the DGU section until better data emerges. I would be more than happy to meet virtually to further discuss the research surrounding DGUs and how best to correct the misinformation in the Factsheet.

Best,  
Devin

On Wed, Sep 1, 2021 at 1:57 PM Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO wrote:  
Hi Devin and Po-

(b)(6)

Thank you for your patience. I shared your email with the CDC who shared this in response:

We appreciate this feedback. We've reviewed the materials and CDC's fact sheet notes that estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the data source, questions asked, populations studied, timeframes, and other factors related to the design of studies. Estimates from the Gun Violence Archive represent another data source and estimates based on that source will also vary from other estimates, especially from population-based surveys that gather information that may not ever be reported to official sources like law enforcement. The methodology used to capture defensive gun violence by the Gun Violence Archive represents a very small subset of people who have used guns defensively, and does not include individuals who might have used guns defensively, but not reported this use to law enforcement. e.g. a person who comes to the front porch with a gun to deter a stranger from trespassing on his/her property and then doesn't think anything of it when the stranger leaves the property. CDC reviewed many studies for the estimates used for this range in the fact sheet and an update is not warranted at this time. The President's Budget request asks for funding for firearm violence prevention which will facilitate data collection and research in these areas.

I am looping in Dr. Deb Houry from the CDC as well for any follow up.

Thank you!

--

Hannah Bristol (she/her)  
White House Office of Public Engagement

(b)(6)

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**From:** Devin Hughes < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 19, 2021 1:42 PM  
**To:** Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO < (b)(6) >  
**Cc:** Po Murray < >; Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO (b)(6)  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hi Hannah,

Nice to meet you as well. Just wanted to follow up on this to see if there is any additional information.

Many Thanks,  
Devin

On Fri, Aug 6, 2021, 2:34 PM Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO (b)(6) wrote:  
Thanks Po and nice to meet you Devin. I will reach out and circle back when I have more information.

--

Hannah Bristol (she/her)  
White House Office of Public Engagement

(b)(6)

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**From:** Po Murray < >  
**Sent:** Friday, August 6, 2021 3:22 PM  
**To:** Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO < (b)(6) >; Devin Hughes < >; Saenz, Adrian EOP/WHO (b)(6)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] CDC Contact: Inaccurate defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet

Hello Adrian and Hannah,

Please e-meet Devin Hughes, founder of GVPedia. I am a board member of GVPedia and we were hoping to connect with a leader at CDC on this important issue that Devin has outlined in the e-mail below. Would you be able to connect us to the appropriate person from CDC?

Thank you in advance for your help.

Best Regards,  
Po Murray  
Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance & Newtown Action Alliance Foundation  
NewtownAction.org

P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Devin Hughes** <(b)(6)>  
Date: Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 2:44 PM  
Subject: Fwd: Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet  
To: Po Murray <>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Devin Hughes** <(b)(6)>  
Date: Tue, Jul 6, 2021, 1:33 PM  
Subject: Defensive gun use numbers in the Firearm Violence Prevention fact sheet  
To: <[Media@cdc.gov](mailto:Media@cdc.gov)>

Dear Director Bonds:

I'm writing to you today with a suggested revision to the Firearm Violence Prevention [fact sheet](#) on the CDC's website. I am the president and founder of GVPedia, a non-profit that provides access to gun violence research and data. Our mission is to ensure that policymakers have access to the most accurate, reliable, and up to date gun violence research.

Under the section of the fact sheet titled "What is defensive gun use? How often does it occur?" the following information is provided:

*"Although definitions of defensive gun use vary, it is generally defined as the use of a firearm to protect and defend one's self, family, others, and/or property against crime or victimization.*

*Estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the questions asked, populations studied, timeframe, and other factors related to the design of studies. The report [Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence](#) indicates a range of 60,000 to 2.5 million defensive gun uses each year."*

The 2.5 million figure cited by the fact sheet and the report referenced come from small private surveys conducted in the 1990s. These surveys came under intense academic scrutiny, which uncovered a number of fatal flaws in their methodology. Dr. David Hemewnay of Harvard University published *Survey Research and Self-Defense Gun Use: An Explanation of Extreme Overestimates* in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology that examines these surveys and explains the extreme overestimates.



Further, the report referenced in the fact sheet, *Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence*, was published in 2013, and therefore, does not include data from the Gun Violence Archive, the most widely accepted compendium of gun violence data. GVA started providing data in 2014, a year after the report was published. Data from the Gun Violence Archive indicates approximately 2,000 verified defensive gun uses annually. This data, based on police and media reports, is substantially lower than the estimates provided by private surveys (which estimate around 2.5 million) and the NCVS surveys (which estimate around 60,000).

Given the substantial concerns raised by academics about DGU survey results, and considering the new data from the Gun Violence Archive, we urge the CDC to revisit and update the DGU portion of the factsheet. People wishing to learn about gun violence rely on the CDC to provide accurate, up-to-date information. Citing figures based on decades-old, discredited surveys could produce a misleading picture of gun violence today. The public and policy makers need accurate data to make informed decisions.

GVPedia has compiled a factsheet highlighting the existing research and the flaws in the 2.5 million figure, which can be found [here](#). I've written extensively on the topic and would be more than happy to discuss this further, and/or provide further resources.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Devin Hughes, President & Founder

GVPedia

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Devin L. Hughes, CFA  
Hughes Capital Management, LLC

(b)(6)

**From:** Holton, Kelly (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD)  
**Sent:** Thu, 2 Sep 2021 16:02:32 +0000  
**To:** Watkins, Jacqueline (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD); Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD)  
**Cc:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD)  
**Subject:** RE:

I'm happy to give a heads up to OADC. Can someone share the response to the inquiry from yesterday?

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**From:** Watkins, Jacqueline (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 11:57 AM  
**To:** Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >; Holton, Kelly (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Cc:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Lee, Kinzie (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Subject:** FW:

Melissa and Kelly,

This same request came in through Sen. Durbin's office as well on behalf of Newtown Action Alliance yesterday. I know several people on this email were pulled into the response to that yesterday. Since we've received through multiple sources, OA has suggested giving OADC a heads up in case there are any media inquiries. Melissa and Kelly – you both likely have closer connection to OADC and we defer to you on if/how that should be done.

Jackie

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**From:** Podolsky, Melissa (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 31, 2021 1:30 PM  
**To:** Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP) < >; Watkins, Jacqueline (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD) < >  
**Subject:**

From a request regarding the FA Violence Prevention fact sheet on our website.

*"Estimates of defensive gun use vary depending on the questions asked, populations studied, timeframe, and other factors related to the design of studies. The report [Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence](#) indicates a range of 60,000 to 2.5 million defensive gun uses each year."*

The 2.5 million figure cited by the fact sheet and the report referenced come from small private surveys conducted in the 1990s. These surveys came under intense academic scrutiny, which uncovered a number of fatal flaws in their methodology. Dr. David Hemewnay of Harvard University published *Survey Research and Self-Defense Gun Use: An Explanation of Extreme Overestimates* in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology that examines these surveys and explains the extreme overestimates.



Further, the report referenced in the fact sheet, *Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence*, was published in 2013, and therefore, does not include data from the Gun Violence Archive, the most widely accepted compendium of gun violence data. GVA started providing data in 2014, a year after the report was published.

Data from the Gun Violence Archive indicates approximately 2,000 verified defensive gun uses annually. This data, based on police and media reports, is substantially lower than the estimates provided by private surveys (which estimate around 2.5 million) and the NCVS surveys (which estimate around 60,000).