

Newtown Action Alliance
Newtown Action Alliance Foundation
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
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.

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

(b)(6)

| @HannahBristol46

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From: Po Murray <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, August 6, 2021 3:22 PM
To: Bristol, Hannah M. EOP/WHO <[REDACTED]>; Devin Hughes <[REDACTED]>
<[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
203-512-1778

----- 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>

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)