

Gun Suicides Often Spike After Homicides Rise

Researchers uncovered a close link between gun suicide and homicides in a new multi-decade study in 48 states between 1968 and 2019. The study was conducted at the New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center. It challenges the assumption that suicide and homicide are separate issues. Researchers found that increases in homicide rates preceded spikes in suicide rates, especially when firearms are involved and among whites. Across all demographics, researchers noted that a one-point increase in a county's homicide rate predicted a 3.6% rise in suicide rates the following year. The connection was even stronger for firearm-related deaths. For each one-point rise in the firearm homicide rate, there was a 5.7% increase in firearm suicides. The researchers concluded that homicides do not happen in a vacuum — they create consequences for families and communities left to cope after a fatal shooting. They encouraged violence prevention strategies to include suicide prevention strategies, with a focus on firearm access, structural inequalities and rural health disparities.

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