

Study Links Assault Injuries, Guns and Substance Abuse in Youth



Teens and young adults who are treated in the emergency room for injury from an assault, who own or carry a gun, are more likely to have problems with substance abuse and aggressive behavior than those without guns, a new study finds.

Researchers from the University of Michigan Injury Center studied 689 teens and young adults who were treated in an emergency room for injuries from an assault.

They found 23 percent reported they owned or carried a gun in the past six months.

Those with guns were more likely than those without them to use illegal drugs or misuse prescription drugs, the researchers report in the journal *Pediatrics*.

They were also more likely to have been in a serious fight in recent months, and to approve of retaliation after an injury, PsychCentral reports.

"This study zeroes in on a high-risk population of assault injured youth that has not been studied in this way previously," lead author Patrick Carter, M.D., said in a news release. "The high rates of substance use, fighting and attitudes favoring retaliation, combined with the fact that so many of these youth had firearms, increases their risk for future firearm violence, as well as injury or death. But, our findings also provide an opportunity for public health interventions that could decrease their future firearm violence risk."