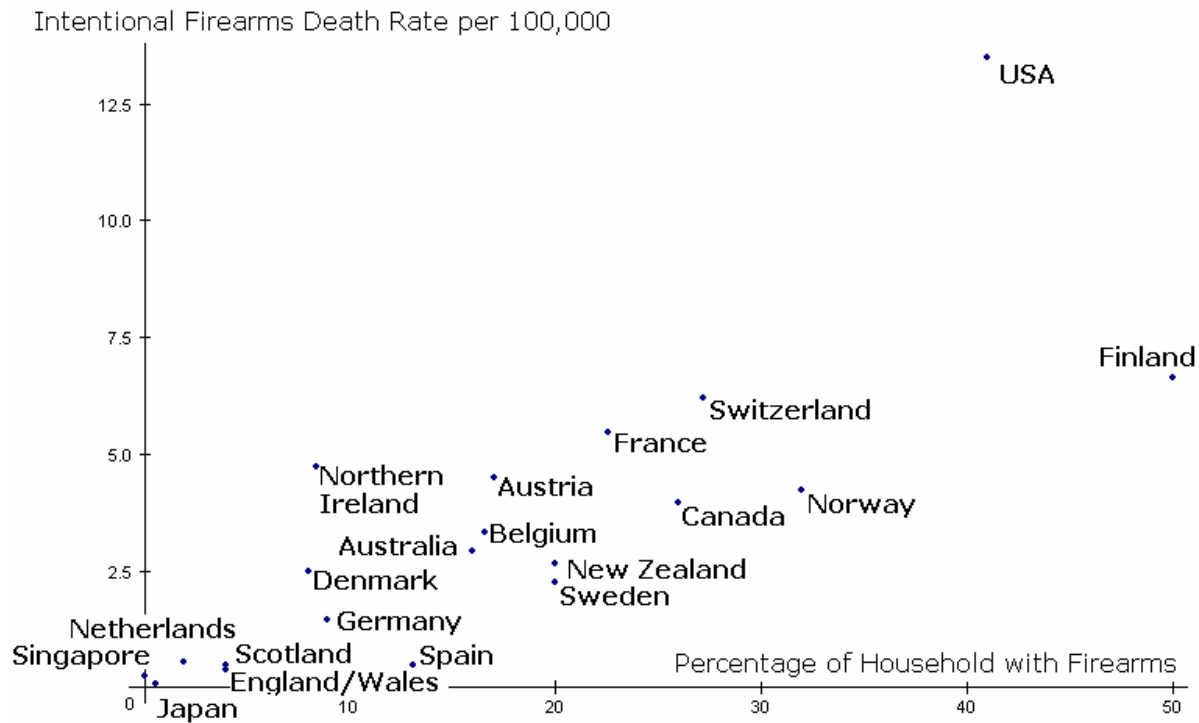


MORE GUNS = MORE DEATHS

Some claim that more guns will make us safer. In fact, where there are more guns there are more deaths. A terrible irony is that both in Canada and internationally where there are more guns there tend to be more opposition to gun control. What's worse, where there are more guns there are also higher rates of gun death and injury.

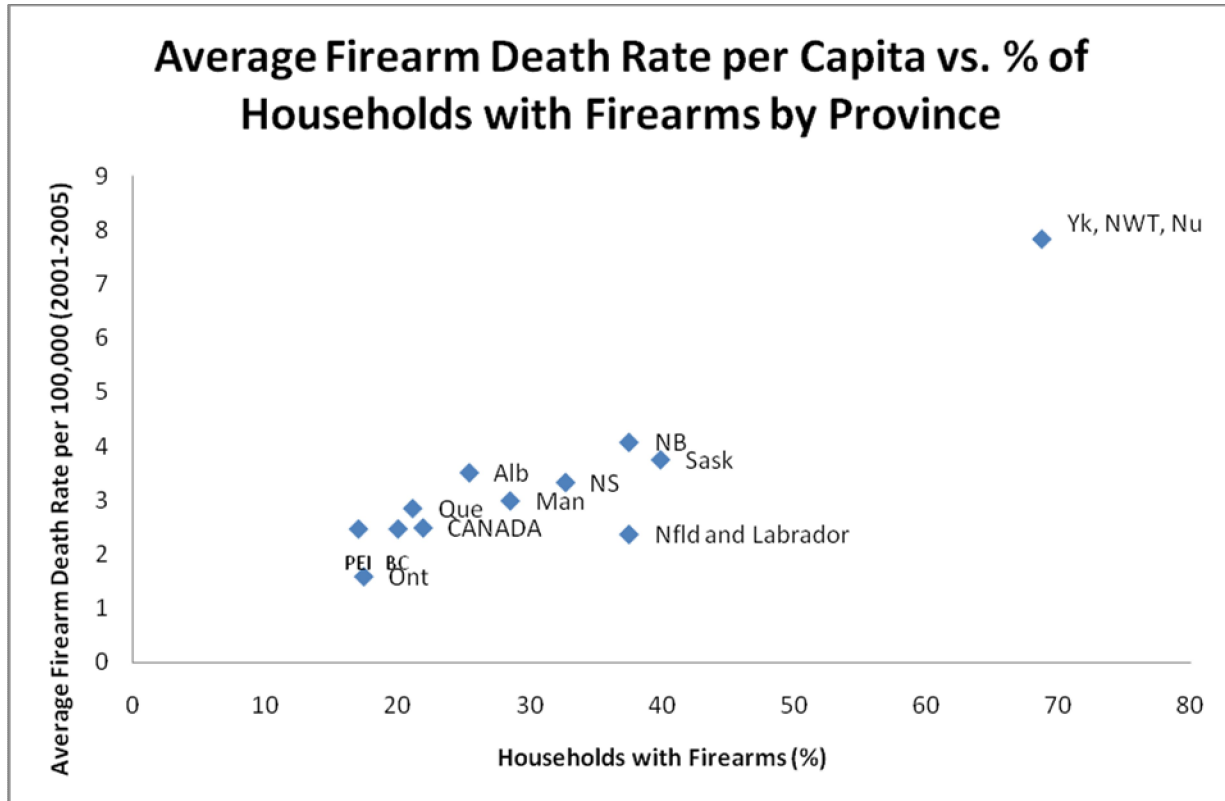
International Comparisons

Among industrialized countries, where there are higher rates of gun ownership, there are also higher rates of gun death. This is because when there are guns in the home they are more likely to be used in suicides¹, and domestic homicides², or to be the cause of accidental injury, particularly among youth.³



Source: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict. Geneva: ICRC, June 1999.

This is also true within Canada. In spite of the attention focused on urban crime, there are higher rates of gun death and injury in rural areas⁴. For example, Northeastern Ontario has gun death rates which are twice the provincial average, driven largely by higher than average suicide rates but also by increased rates of domestic violence with firearms and firearm related accidents. The Western provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta all have higher percentages of gun ownership, and to go along with this, these provinces also have firearm death rates that are higher than the Canadian average. In 2008, RCMP in rural Alberta noted an increase in the number of gun-related calls.⁵ In that province, 68% of suicides by firearms are in rural areas.⁶ In spite of the surge of gang related handgun violence in Toronto, Ontario has one of the lowest rates of gun death and injury in the country. Homicide rates were highest in the western provinces and in the North.⁷



Source: Updated from Miller, T. and Cohen, M. "Costs of Gunshot and Cut/Stab Wounds in the United States, with some Canadian Comparisons." *Accid Anal Prev* 1997; 29 (3): 329-41 with data from Statistics Canada, "Mortality, Summary List of Causes", 2001-2005; Canada Firearms Center, Facts and Figures, January 8, 2009.

Research has shown that when other factors are held constant, gun death rates rise in proportion to the rate of gun ownership. One study found a 92% correlation between households with guns and firearm death rates both within Canada and in comparable industrialized countries.⁸ Other studies show that increased risks are associated with keeping guns in the home: Homicide of a family member is 2.7 times more likely to occur in a home with a firearm than in a home without guns.⁹ Keeping one or more firearms was associated with a 4.8 fold increased risk of suicide in the home. The risks increase, particularly for adolescents, when guns are kept loaded and unlocked.¹⁰

In a study of changes in suicide rates with firearm ownership over a 22-year period, it was shown that for every 10% decline in gun ownership, there was a corresponding drop in firearm suicide rates of 4.2%.¹¹ Comparing Canada and the US is also instructive. Rates of homicide without guns in the US are only slightly higher than in Canada whereas rates of homicide with guns are much higher. This suggests that the availability of firearms is a critical fact in the high US homicide rate.¹⁰

Canada-US Comparison, Homicide

2008	Canada	US	Comparison US vs Canada
Total Homicide	611	16,272	
Rate of Homicide	1.83 per 100,000	5.4 per 100,000	3x
Total Homicide with Firearms	200	10,739	
Rate of Homicide with Firearms	0.59 per 100,000	3.56 per 100,000	6x
Homicides without Guns	411	5,532	
Rates of Homicides without Guns	1.23 per 100,000	1.83 per 100,000	1.4x
Total Handgun Homicides	121	7,647	
Rates of Handgun Homicides	0.36 per 100,000	2.53 per 100,000	7x
Total Rifle and Shotgun Homicides	34	813	
Rates of Rifle and Shotgun Homicides	0.1 per 100,000	0.26 per 100,000	2.6x

Source: US Department of Justice, "2008 Crime statistics, Expanded Homicide Data," September 2009. Table 20. http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2008/data/table_20.html. US Department of Justice, "2008 Crime statistics, Expanded Homicide Data," September 2009. Table 1. http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2008/data/table_01.html. Sarah Beattie. "Homicide in Canada 2008," Statistics Canada. Juristat, vol. 29, no. 4, October 2009.

¹ Kellermann AL, Rivara FP, Somes G, et al. Suicide in the home in relation to gun ownership. *N Engl J Med* 1992;327:467-72.

² Campbell JC, Webster D, Koziol-McLain J, et al. Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: results from a multisite case control study. *Am J Public Health* 2003;93:1089-97.

³ Grossman DC, Reay DT, Baker SA. Self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and adolescents: the source of the firearm. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 1999;153:875-8.

⁴ Hung, Kwing. "Firearm Statistics, Updated Tables". Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada. January 2006.

⁵ Richard Liebrecht, "Rural violence on rise More people resorting to guns when conflicts arise, says RCMP officer," Edmonton Sun, 29 March 2009.

⁶ 1990-2002. Alberta Justice, "2002 Annual Review, Office of the Chief Medical Officer," 2003.

⁷ Sarah Beattie. "Homicide in Canada 2008." Statistics Canada. Juristat, vol. 29, no. 4. October 2009.

⁸ Gabor T. *The impact of the availability of firearms on violent crime, suicide, and accidental death*. Ottawa: Department of Justice Canada, 1994.

⁹ Cukier, Wendy. "Firearms Regulation : Canada in the International Context". *Chronic Diseases in Canada*, Volume 19, No. 1 – 2000. Public Health Agency of Canada.

¹⁰ Kellerman AL, et al. Suicide in the home in relation to gun ownership. *New Engl J Med* 1992;327:467-72.

¹¹ Miller M, Azrael D, Hepburn L, et al. The association between changes in household firearm ownership and rates of suicide in the United States, 1981–2002. *Inj Prev* 2006;12:178-82.