

Firearm Safety Intervention Study

Albright T, Burge SK. Improving firearm storage habits: the impact of brief office counseling by family physicians. Journal of the American Board of Family Practice 2003; 16:40-46.

Background: Firearm injury is the leading cause of injury-related death among youth, and second leading cause of injury-related death, overall, in the United States. Our objective is to determine the impact of brief office counseling by family physicians on patients' firearm storage habits.

Methods: 1233 subjects completed enrollment surveys; 156 (13%) reported guns in their household and agreed to participate in the study. Post-intervention surveys were completed by 127 subjects for 81% follow-up. Participants received no counseling, verbal counseling alone, or with a gun safety brochure from their physician. Firearm storage habits were measured at baseline and 60-90 days after intervention.

Results: 46% and 49% of the 'verbal counseling' and 'verbal plus written counseling' groups, respectively, made a 'safe change' in gun storage compared to 29% of participants in the 'no-intervention' group ($p=.031$). A logistic regression model controlling for demographics and gun ownership showed that intervention participants were 2.2 times more likely to make 'safe' changes than controls.

Conclusions: Family physicians' brief counseling efforts made a significant positive impact in the firearm storage habits of their patients. With a verbal or written recommendation, a significant improvement was observed in firearm storage.