

# Firearm Safety Survey

*Weigle, David. Examining Firearm Storage Habits of Family Medicine Patients: An RRNeT Study, Annual Scientific Assembly, American Academy of Family Physicians San Francisco, September 2005.*

**Background:** Firearm-related injuries are the second leading cause of injury-related death in the United States

**Objective:** to determine firearm storage habits of family medicine patients who own guns, and to evaluate risk factors that may guide family physicians' injury prevention efforts.

**Methods:** 106 family medicine patients with guns in their household completed a survey assessing quantities, types, and purposes of firearms in their households, and the location and methods of storage.

**Results:** Respondents were about half Latino and half nonHispanic White. 53% were male, with average age of 51 years. Half had no children in the household. The median number of guns per household was two. Hunters owned more guns than nonhunters (4.6 vs 2.0,  $p=.000$ ), and were more likely to own rifles and shotguns. Those who had guns for protection were more likely than others to own handguns. Thirty-eight percent reported triple-safe storage: firearms which were unloaded, locked up, and inaccessible to children. Logistic regression analysis showed that the strongest independent predictors of triple-safe firearm storage were: being Hispanic; being a handgun owner; using firearms for hunting; and a greater number of adults in the household. In general, subjects' attitudes toward guns were favorable. 42% percent felt more safe with a gun, and 84-92% were unworried about accidental or intentional injury from firearms.

**Conclusions:** This brief survey demonstrated that only 38 percent of firearm-owning households in our practices stored their guns in a completely safe manner. We found that most were unworried about injury, and that many felt *more safe* with a gun in the house.