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# Economic Impact and Health Disparities of Firearm Injuries Treated within the Thomas Jefferson University Health System

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Christina Wohler  
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SI PHR Abstract  
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**Economic Impact and Health Disparities of Firearm Injuries Treated within the Thomas  
Jefferson University Health System**

Christina Wohler & Stanton Miller, MD

**Introduction:**

Firearms are a significant cause of morbidity and mortality in the United States. In 2015, firearms killed over 36,000 Americans (CDC, 2017), and in 2013 were responsible for \$229 billion in healthcare and other costs (Cerdá 2016). On an average day in Philadelphia, 4 people are injured or killed by firearms (Beard 2017). This purpose of this project is to further investigate these trends in the context of the Thomas Jefferson University Health System.

**Objective:**

To date, no research exists to examine firearm violence within the Thomas Jefferson University Hospital (TJUH) System. The purpose of this study is to fill that gap by exploring the geographic distribution, demographics, and cost associated with firearm injuries at TJUH. This information could help identify high-risk patient groups, and contribute to targeted interventions, education, and policy in the future.

**Methods:**

This study is a 10-year retrospective analysis of TJUH medical records. ICD codes were used to identify patients treated between January 2008 and December 2017 for firearm-related

injuries. Information such as patient zip code, age, ethnicity, insurance, and past medical history are being collected. This data is being entered into REDCap for analysis.

### **Results:**

There were 505 cases of firearm injuries recorded at TJUH between January 2008 and December 2017. Data are still being collected, so final results are forthcoming.

### **Conclusion:**

Firearms are a pervasive and deadly threat to public health across the United States. Data collection is ongoing, so firm conclusions cannot yet be drawn. However, there were more cases of firearm violence within the study period than were expected. This stresses the importance of quantifying and studying this problem, so we may be better informed and better prepared to address it.

### **References:**

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3. Beard JH, Sims CA. “Structural causes of urban firearm violence: A trauma surgeon’s view from Philadelphia.” *JAMA Surgery* 152.6 (2017): 515