

Hispanic Victims of Lethal Firearms Violence in the United States

In June 2016, the Violence Policy Center (VPC) released the third edition of its annual report *Hispanic Victims of Lethal Firearms Violence in the United States*, a comprehensive study on lethal gun violence against Hispanics in America. The study is based on data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as unpublished information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) *Supplementary Homicide Report*. The study is available at the Violence Policy Center's website (www.vpc.org) in both English and Spanish. (For the English-language version, please see <http://www.vpc.org/studies/hispanic16.pdf> and for the Spanish-language version please see <http://www.vpc.org/studies/hispanicesp16.pdf>.) Prior editions of the report can be found at www.vpc.org/hispanic.htm. Below are key findings and recommendations from the study.

FINDINGS

- **More than 50,000 Hispanics were killed by guns between 1999 and 2014.** During this period, 33,532 Hispanics died in gun homicides, 14,431 died in gun suicides, and 944 died in unintentional shootings.
- **In 2014, more than 3,000 Hispanics were killed by guns.** That year 1,732 Hispanics died in gun homicides, 1,114 died in gun suicides, 48 died in unintentional shootings, and 116 died in other circumstances (including legal intervention and undetermined intent).
- **Homicide is the second leading cause of death for Hispanics ages 15 to 24.**
- **The homicide victimization rate for Hispanics in the United States is nearly twice as high as the homicide victimization rate for whites.** The Hispanic homicide victimization rate in 2014 was 4.69 per 100,000. In comparison, the homicide victimization rate for whites was 2.41 per 100,000.
- **Most Hispanic murder victims are killed with guns.** Guns are used in more than two-thirds of the homicides where the victims are Hispanic. The latest data shows that for homicides where the victim was Hispanic and a gun was used, 69 percent of these shootings involved a handgun.
- **Hispanic victims are more likely to be killed by a stranger than the national average.** The latest data from 2013 shows that when the victim-to-offender relationship could be identified, 35 percent of Hispanic victims were killed by a stranger. Nationwide, 25 percent of all homicide victims were killed by strangers.

- **A large percentage of Hispanic homicide victims are young.** The most recent available data shows 38 percent of Hispanic homicide victims in 2013 were age 24 and younger. In comparison, 38 percent of black homicide victims and 21 percent of white homicide victims were age 24 and younger that year.
- **As a result of the limitations in current data collection, the total number of Hispanic victims is almost certainly higher than the reported numbers suggest.** Government agencies often report data on race but not on ethnic origin. Recognizing the changing demographic landscape in the United States, it is clear that fully documenting such victimization is a crucial first step toward preventing it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Governmental agencies that collect data on death and injury should obtain complete information on the ethnic origin of individuals in addition to their race. This will ensure complete and accurate data collection on Hispanic victims of lethal violence.
- Individual-level ethnic origin information should be captured by all governmental agencies, regardless of department, and at all levels — local, state, and national — for all pertinent users and subjects of agency services.
- Individual-level ethnic origin information should be self-reported and not based solely on a person's surname or other measure.
- All public access data and published reports issued by governmental agencies should include information on ethnic origin in addition to race.
- The U.S. Department of Justice — specifically, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Justice Statistics — should issue periodic or special reports on Hispanic victimization.
- States with a substantial proportion of Hispanic residents should issue periodic or special reports on Hispanic victimization and deaths due to all causes, including violence.

For more information on these and other firearm violence issues, please visit the Violence Policy Center's website at www.vpc.org. Or contact VPC Senior Policy Analyst Marty Langley at (202)-822-8200 x 109, mlangley@vpc.org.