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CAT Block 5

Reference: Public Opinion Regarding Whether Speaking With Patients About Firearms is Appropriate. Betz M, Azrael D, Barber C, Miller M. *Ann Intern Med.* 2016; 165: 543-550.

Introduction: Firearm injuries are a major problem in the United States. It is known that access to firearms increases the risk of firearm injury. It is also thought that access increases the risk of completed suicide. Several organizations have advocated for health care providers to routinely discuss issues surrounding firearms (access to firearms, storage of firearms, gun safety) with all patients. However, some have argued against this and even proposed legislation to ban these discussions. This study sought to evaluate public opinion regarding the topic.

Methods: In April 2015, a nationally conducted web based survey was conducted and the data extrapolated to estimate national percentages. Participants were selected from GfK's knowledgePanel. The primary outcome was to assess the following question: "In general, would you think it is never, sometimes, usually or always appropriate for physicians and other health professionals to talk to their patients about firearms?" Three other, related questions were asked regarding alcohol, seat belts and cigarettes.

Results: 7318 panel members were sent invitations to complete the survey. Of those, 4165 started and 3949 completed the survey. Those who responded were more likely to be female, younger, less educated, unmarried and living in metropolitan areas. One half of respondents were men. Average age was 49 years. 66% of respondents said it was at least sometimes appropriate for providers to talk to patients about firearms. 34% felt that these discussions were never appropriate.

Limitations: Sample bias. Applicability to different health care settings. Clinical relevance.
