

## **International Network of Epidemiology Societies Call to Support and Engage Epidemiologists and Public Health Researchers in Addressing Firearm Violence Prevention**

The International Network for Epidemiology in Policy (INEP), a global consortium of professional epidemiology societies with 23 member organizations across 6 continents, published a call for the World Health Organization, governments, and health policy decision-makers worldwide to recognize the global epidemic of privately-owned firearm violence and to take meaningful action to support and engage epidemiologists and other researchers to address firearm violence prevention as an urgent and preventable public health issue.

This is an unprecedented combined call to action by epidemiology professional groups from around the world to take effective actions to address firearm violence and its underlying causes.

The editorial, entitled *The Role of Epidemiology in Firearm Violence Prevention: A Policy Brief*, is scheduled for publication in the distinguished *International Journal of Epidemiology* on April 24, 2018.

### **Selected key observations and findings in the editorial include:**

-- Firearm violence results in self-harm or harm to others *contributing substantially to injury, premature death, and disability worldwide*. It accounts for *yet unmeasured millions of dollars* in direct and indirect health care and related costs. Firearm ownership is associated with increased morbidity and premature mortality.

--While laws intended to curb firearm violence can be effective, they are insufficient for preventing firearm-related harms and for addressing important contributing local and societal factors.

--A global effort is needed to generate accurate, community-relevant information about the issues associated with firearm-related violence and translating it into evidence-based policies and public health interventions that prevent and mitigate the harms of firearms.

--Epidemiologists have unique interdisciplinary tools for addressing the contributors and barriers to preventing and mitigating injury, including firearm violence, but have been underfunded in accomplishing this work.

### **Actions called for include:**

-- Governments, public health and human rights organizations worldwide should:

- 1) collect and make available relevant data about firearm violence and prevention; and
- 2) prioritize funding for research specifically aimed at assessing the scale and scope of firearm violence, and promoting the development and evaluation of firearm violence prevention interventions.

-- Epidemiologists worldwide, working with other public health professionals, engage and be supported to conduct multi-disciplinary firearm violence prevention research, especially in designing and evaluating prevention and mitigation strategies for the communities they serve.

“Violence prevention is part of our work as epidemiologists globally in protecting the health of our communities including firearm violence prevention work. With this policy, we are joining together to call on decision makers and other funders worldwide to substantially invest in ending and mitigating this worldwide epidemic”, states primary co-author, Dr James A. Gaudino, Jr. MD, MPH, MS, FACPM, INEP Executive Committee member and Affiliate Associate Professor at the Oregon Health & Sciences University and Portland State University School of Public Health (OHSU-PSU SPH).

Summarizing why this call for action matters, Wael Al-Delaimy, MD, PhD, INEP Chairperson and Professor and Chief of the Division of Global Health at the University of California San Diego stated, “this policy brief is the contribution of our member organizations to the ongoing discussion regarding firearm violence at the

international level; it is also highly relevant in the US, where rates of private firearm ownership and firearm violence are particularly high. Epidemiologists have the skills to move the debate about firearm violence into evidence-based prevention and public health actions and policies. We must do more to prevent and mitigate the effects of firearm violence in the communities we serve.”

### To Media partners

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