

Firearm Access and Suicide Risk Among California Youth

Suicide is a leading cause of death among youth ages 15–24, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Firearms are used in half of all suicides in the U.S. A new UCLA CHPR study on suicide prevention examines firearms ownership, psychological distress, and suicide ideation and attempts among California youth in 2021 and 2022.



1 in 4 (24.6%)
adolescents
(ages 15–17) reported
having had thoughts of
suicide in their lifetime

Nearly
1 in 3 (30.8%)
young adults
(ages 18–24) reported
having had thoughts of
suicide in their lifetime

Youth reporting firearms at home

20,000+ (1.5%)
ages 15–17

500,000+ (14.2%)
ages 18–24



Suicide ideation, attempts, and gun ownership

10.9%
of youth who had thought
about suicide in their lifetime
reported a firearm at home

8.4%
of youth who made a suicide
attempt in their lifetime
reported a firearm at home

Worried about being a victim of gun violence

Compared with youth who did not have concerns about firearm victimization, youth who reported concerns about firearm victimization in 2022 were:

More than
2x
as likely to report
experiencing
suicidal thoughts
in their lifetime

More than
2x
as likely to have
psychological
distress

