Gun Storage Practices among U.S. Veterans

October 12, 2018  
News Type: Weekly Spark, Weekly Spark Research

A national study found that one in three U.S. veteran gun owners stores at least one gun loaded and unlocked in their home. Gun storage practices differ based on individual and household sociodemographic factors, gun ownership characteristics, and risk perceptions. This research offers insight into gun storage practices that can help inform suicide prevention efforts among veteran gun owners.

Data from this study came from the National Firearms Survey, an online survey designed to assess gun ownership and storage practices among a nationally representative sample of adults. For this study, researchers used data from 561 veterans who owned guns. They found 33.3 percent of veteran gun owners stored at least one of their guns loaded and unlocked. Sixty-six percent of veteran gun owners stored at least one gun unlocked, and 46.7 percent stored at least one loaded.

Study participants were more likely to report storing a gun loaded and unlocked if they were male, did not have children in their household, and owned a greater number of guns. The likelihood of storing at least one firearm loaded and unlocked was higher among those who reported personal protection as the primary reason for gun ownership, and among those who agreed that having a gun in the home makes the household safer.


Populations: Military Service Members and Veterans
Strategies: Reduce Access to Means