



Increased Firearm-Related Violence in Sweden

A Challenge for Emergency Medicine

Aim: To evaluate the rate of firearm-related violence in Sweden between 2016 and 2017, and compare the rate of deadly violence and firearm-related violence in Sweden with other Nordic countries between the years 2011 and 2017.

Background: International and Swedish studies state that firearm-related violence has been increasing and that Sweden has one of the highest rates of shootings and thus firearm-related violence in Western Europe. Most studies, however, have focused on a specific Swedish geographical location, used limited sources of information or focused on a timeframe ending 2015.

Methods: Statistics were retrieved from the Swedish police, the National Council for Crime Prevention (NCCP) and the National Board of Health and Welfare (NBHW). Regarding the Nordic countries included in the study, their official national statistics was used. If not been possible, statistics from the health statistics and information systems of the World Health Organization or statistics from the Eurostat was used.

Results: Since 2012, the number of deadly violence has increased, reaching 113 in 2017 (Fig 1). According to the NCCP, a firearm was used in 20% of all homicides in the 1990s and until 2011 when it started to increase. In 2017, there were 306 shootings where 135 individuals were wounded and 41 killed (36% of all homicides) (Fig 2). Statistics from the NBHW shows that between 2012 and 2017 the number of individuals being hospitalized because of a firearm injury, increased with 50% (Fig 3).

Between 2011-2017, Sweden had the highest rate of firearm-related violence in comparison to Finland, Norway and Denmark (Fig 4). Finland had the highest numbers of deadly violence. Since 2016, however, Sweden have had higher numbers of deadly violence than any other Scandinavian country.

Conclusion: Official statistics clearly show that the number of firearm-related violence, including firearm-related homicides, have significantly increased in the last decade, not least in 2012 – 2017. This is probably why Sweden is witnessing an increase in its total rate of deadly violence. Because of the increasing rates, there is no doubt that Emergency Medicine faces a new challenge and needs clear guidelines regarding both medical management and security issues related to firearm-related violence.

Fig 1. Rate of deadly violence



Fig 2. Rate of firearm-related homicides

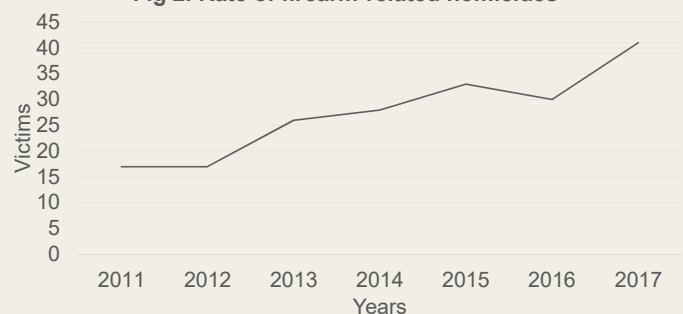


Fig 3. Rate of individuals treated for firearm-related injuries



Fig 4. Rate of firearm-related homicides in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark

