Available on: https://jsshrs.ep-journals.org/ E-ISSN: 3051-3561, P-ISSN: 3051-3553

Journal of Social Science and Human Research Studies

Volume: 02 Issue: 05 May-2026

Gun Violence as a Public Health Issue in the United States: A Review of Sociological and Criminal Justice Prevention Approaches

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Published Date: May 29, 2026 **Article DOI: 10.65150/EP-jsshrs/V2E5/2026-19**

ABSTRACT: Gun violence in the United States has been identified as a multifaceted problem at the nexus of public health, and criminal justice, with high population-wide effects and longstanding disparities. The purpose of this narrative review is to synthesize sociological and criminal justice views through a public health framework and the creation of an integrated view of the understanding and prevention of firearm violence. A narrative review was performed with the help of major academic databases, literature, where the theoretical contribution, the main empirical studies, and the policy-oriented studies published between 2017 and 2025 were used. The studies were chosen based on their relevance to the issues of public health, structural determinants, and criminal justice interventions. The review cites gun violence as an imbalanced distribution among populations, based on structural inequality, community disorganization, and social network dynamics. There is evidence that specific deterrence tactics like focused deterrence and community-based interventions are consistently effective, whereas more general enforcement strategies and some firearm policies are less effective. One weakness in studies is the absence of interdisciplinary approach, which limits the formulation of holistic prevention plans. In response, this paper introduces the Integrated Public Health and Criminal Justice Framework, which integrates structural, community, and individual interventions to reduce firearm-related violence in the United States. The solution to gun violence should be a multi-level and integrated system that incorporates public health prevention strategies, sociological, and criminal justice approaches. Evidence-based, coordinated, and equity-oriented strategies are critical to attaining sustainable decreases in firearm violence.

KEYWORDS: Inquiry-based learning, Primary science education, Greek science curriculum reform, Curriculum implementation, Teacher professional, development Epistemological beliefs, Formative assessment, Experimental Model Schools, Digital tools in science education, Sustainable educational reform

1. INTRODUCTION

Gun violence in the United States has become an intricate and enduring problem, which is increasingly defined as a public health crisis, though it continues to be heavily embedded in the criminal justice field. The modern studies emphasize the extent of the firearm-related damage in terms of morbidity, mortality, and the prevalence among populations (South et al., 2022; Semenza et al., 2025). Notably, gun violence is not uniformly distributed but has obvious differences by demographic characteristics, especially in young people and disadvantaged groups (Bottiani et al., 2021; Rajan et al., 2022). These trends support the necessity to go beyond incident-centered views to population-based models, which focus more on prevention, risk distribution, and health outcomes in the long-term perspective (Cook & Ludwig, 2019; Iwundu et al., 2022).

Concurrently, firearm violence is entrenched in structural and social inequalities, which influence the exposure and prevention ability. The increased risks of firearm violence have been described to be consistently connected with socioeconomic disadvantage, racial inequality, and local neighborhood conditions, which are certain systemic inequity trends (Bailey et al., 2017; Buggs et al., 2022). Spatial and temporal clustering of violence is another element that supports these structural dynamics in which some communities are persistently and concentratedly exposed to violence (Larson et al., 2023; McMillan et al., 2024). Moreover, there are interconnected manifestations of violence, such as interpersonal and community-level violence, that lead to cumulative risk and trauma, highlighting the need to learn how to see gun violence as a part of a larger ecosystem of social vulnerability (Swanson & Rosenberg, 2023).

The criminal justice field has long prioritized over policing, heavy surveillance and legal control as the traditional responses to gun violence. Although these strategies continue to play a primary role in the process of violence control, their efficiency is becoming a controversial topic, especially in terms of their overall social and health outcomes (Braga et al., 2022; Braga, 2022). There is some emerging evidence that some enforcement methods can have unanticipated effects, such as poor health outcomes and negative community-institution relationships (Simckes et al., 2021; Zare et al., 2025). Moreover, unequal relations in the interactions of the justice system and youth in particular, as well as high-risk groups, indicate a need to address them more specifically and fairly (Swanson et al., 2022). The increasing popularity of data-driven policy and evidence-based decision-making further highlights the need to incorporate sound data in criminal justice interventions or policies(Roman et al., 2025; Ashok et al., 2025).

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Although this is growing in the body of research, the literature has been disjointed across the fields of public health, and criminal justice, which restricts the ability to develop integrated, effective prevention measures. The prevention and risk reduction of public health studies, the structural determinants and inequality of sociological research, and the enforcement and policy interventions of criminal justice scholarship are prioritized (McMillan & Bernstein, 2022; Lemke et al., 2022). This disintegration has led to loopholes in the comprehension of the interplay of various levels of influence in creating and perpetuating violence. While prior studies have examined gun violence through separate disciplinary lenses, this paper contributes to the literature by developing an integrated framework that combines public health and criminal justice approaches into a single prevention model. This narrative review is a response to this, and it will seek to synthesize and integrate these perspectives in a single framework, as well as the inclusion of community-based and equity-oriented interventions like mental health support, trauma-informed care, and community engagement (Ugwu et al., 2025; Ajayi & Thompson, 2025; Gordon et al., 2025; Egbunu & Cudjoe-Mensah, 2025). Through this, the study aims to further understand gun violence in a more holistic and interdisciplinary manner and provide more viable and sustainable policy responses.

2. REVIEW APPROACH

This narrative review employs a thematic and integrative methodology designed to synthesize interdisciplinary scholarship on gun violence across public health and criminal justice domains. Relevant literature was identified through searches conducted in major academic databases, including Taylor & Francis, Wiley Online Library, Web of Science, Scopus, and Elsevier (ScienceDirect), using combinations of keywords such as “gun violence,” “firearm violence,” “public health,” “social determinants,” “inequality,” “criminal justice,” “policing,” and “prevention.” The search focused on studies published between 2017 and 2025, with particular emphasis on recent contributions to ensure alignment with current debates and evidence. In line with the requirements of the narrative review, conceptual relevance and scholarly contribution led to inclusion, with a preference to theoretical literature, significant empirical studies, and policy-related research contributing to the knowledge on the causes, trends, and prevention of firearm violence. This method allows critically synthesizing the main themes and frameworks, which will help to develop a comprehensive approach to gun violence as a multidimensional problem (Lemke et al., 2022; Braga, 2022).

3. CONCEPTUALIZING GUN VIOLENCE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

The conceptualization of gun violence in the United States has shifted towards a public health perspective due to its high prevalence, patterns of exposure and potential of prevention (South et al., 2022; Semenza et al., 2025). This point of view also moves away from individual criminal behavior to the role of systemic risk factors and health outcomes, placing a particular emphasis on the differences between demographic and geographic groups (Bottiani et al., 2021; McMillan et al., 2024). Focusing the firearm violence issue on the paradigm of the publc, researchers note that the emphasis should be placed on the population-level trends, cumulative exposure, and long-term outcomes, but not on individual cases (Cook & Ludwig, 2019; Iwundu et al., 2022).

More significantly, this framing highlights the necessity of preventive and equity-based interventions to deal with the distribution and determinants of violence. The macro social and structural factors, such as inequality and resource access, shape gun violence and both risk and resilience among populations (Buggs et al., 2022; Bailey et al., 2017). Consequently, firearm violence needs a concerted approach that incorporates prevention, reduction of risks, and health system reactions that can complement the general commitment to enhancing population health and minimizing disparities (Rajan et al., 2022).

3.1 Epidemiological Framing

In terms of epidemiology, gun violence exhibits a great level of prevalence and persistence, and firearm-related injuries and deaths are an important source of morbidity and mortality in the US (Semenza et al., 2025). Firearm violence is not only fatal but can also be long-term physical injuries, psychological traumas, and even more extensive health effects on communities (South et al., 2022; Swanson & Rosenberg, 2023). These trends underscore the significance of viewing gun violence as an ongoing and cumulative population health problem, and not a sequence of incidents.

Gun violence is extremely uneven, exhibiting unique risk distributions by age, race, and geography. There is a disproportionate risk of exposure and victimization in young people, especially adolescents and young adults, and the consequences of developmental and long-term health status are very serious (Bottiani et al., 2021; Swanson et al., 2022). Moreover, firearm violence is specifically clustered in those communities that have structural disadvantage and limited resources, which supports the role of social determinants and place-based inequalities (Buggs et al., 2022; Larson et al., 2023).

Such differences are also conditioned by structural and environmental factors, such as the disadvantage of a community, segregation, and lack of access to supportive services, which all contribute to the vulnerability to violence (McMillan et al., 2024; Gillum et al., 2025). Both direct and indirect exposure to violence are also contributors to cumulative trauma and subsequent victimization and perpetration, demonstrating the significance of early intervention and preventive measures. Combined, these epidemiological trends highlight the importance of specific, data-driven, and equity-based interventions.

3.2 Public Health Model

The public health model offers us a systemic approach to understanding and acting on gun violence using multi-level prevention. Primary prevention is aimed at making it less likely that violence will happen because of underlying risk factors, such as the availability of guns and more general social circumstances leading to violence (Rajan et al., 2022; Rowhani-Rahbar et al., 2022). The focus of secondary prevention is on people and communities who are at high risk and focuses on early detection and intervention to interrupt potential violence paths (Sanchez et al., 2020). Tertiary prevention, in its turn, seeks to minimize the long-term effects of violence by providing medical care, rehabilitation, and continuous support to the individuals who have experienced violence (South et al., 2022).

The recent literature underlines the need to move towards a more preventative and proactive strategy, instead of acting only in response to violence once it has been perpetrated (Rajan et al., 2022; Braga, 2022). The community-based interventions, policy actions, and health system responses are becoming increasingly part of the public health strategies to tackle the immediate and underlying causes of firearm violence (Ugwu et al.,

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2025; Ajayi & Thompson, 2025). These methods stress the need to consider the risks factors not only at the individual level but also in the wider social and environmental contexts where violence takes place.

Nevertheless, the success of the public health strategies is usually dependent on their combination with other frameworks, especially the criminal justice and community-based models. Prevention efforts can be disjointed and focus on a limited area without cross-sector coordination (Lemke et al., 2022). Therefore, the multi-sectoral approach to gun violence, which involves a combination of the public health strategy and enforcement, policy, and community involvement, is the only way to achieve long-term violence reduction.

Table 1: Public Health Framework Applied to Gun Violence

Level	Definition	Example Interventions
Primary	Prevent occurrence	Gun policy, education (Rajan et al., 2022; Rowhani-Rahbar et al., 2022)
Secondary	Early detection	Violence interruption (Sanchez et al., 2020; Braga et al., 2022)
Tertiary	Reduce harm	Trauma care (South et al., 2022; Iwundu et al., 2022)

4. SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GUN VIOLENCE

The conceptualizations of sociological perspectives on gun violence presuppose that it is a product of structural conditions, social organization, and relations, not just individual behavior (Buggs et al., 2022; McMillan & Bernstein, 2022). These methods underscore the role of inequality, community conditions, and patterned social interactions in the allocation and maintenance of firearm violence among populations and the significance of investigating violence within the context of larger systems of social organization and power.

4.1 Structural Inequality

The issue of gun violence is immersed in structural inequality, where inequality in the form of income, resources, and opportunities produces environments that heighten the likelihood of violence. The socioeconomic disadvantage, especially in the concentrated form, has been repeatedly linked to increased rates of firearm-related events since life opportunities and risk exposure are limited by a lack of access to education, employment, and social mobility (Bailey et al., 2017; McMillan et al., 2024). These structural conditions have an interaction on a generational level, which strengthens the cycle of disadvantage that perpetuates susceptibility to violence.

Racial inequality only worsens these relations as it influences the allocation of resources and opportunities within communities. Segregation and structural racism contribute to the concentration of advantage, restricting access to protective resources, including quality housing, health care, and stable community organizations (Bailey et al., 2017; Buggs et al., 2023). Consequently, race, inequality, and institutional exclusion usually have an intersectional impact on marginalized populations, as they tend to be disproportionately affected by firearm violence.

Such patterns are especially noticeable in urban settings where there is spatial concentration of disadvantage, economic deprivation, low institutional presence, as well as social marginalization, which combine to form high-risk settings (Buggs et al., 2022; Gillum et al., 2025). Such conditions not only augment the chances of violence but also limit the ability of the communities to react effectively. Gun violence can only be addressed by tackling these structural determinants and not necessarily individual level interventions.

4.2 Social Disorganization Theory

Social disorganization theory offers a paradigm that can be used to comprehend the role played by weak community structures and institutional instability in increasing the rate of violence. The ability to exercise informal social control is reduced in areas that have residential instability, economic deprivation, and a lack of institutional resources, which results in the environment where violence may arise and continue to exist (Buggs et al., 2022). This view causes the focus to be on the social environments that influence the behavior of people instead of the personal pathology.

One of the key elements of this theory is the loss of informal systems of social control, such as shared norms, collective efficacy, and trust among the residents. The weakening of these mechanisms means that the community controls less, and the escalation of conflicts to higher levels, which results in more violence. The instability is usually compounded by these dynamics in the settings characterized by endemic inequality and inaccessibility of social services (McMillan et al., 2024).

In addition, social disorganization is closely interconnected with other processes of community disintegration, in which lack of or weakening of major institutions, like schools, local organizations, and support networks, weakens social cohesion. This disenfranchisement diminishes the ability to act together and enables the tendencies of gun violence to be deep-rooted over a period of time. Empowerment of the community institutions and restoring social cohesion are hence important parts of successful violence prevention programs.

4.3 Social Networks and Violence Diffusion

In addition to structural and community-based factors, sociological studies put a stress on the power of social networks in the spread of violence, which implies that the spread of firearm violence occurs through inter-personal interactions and common social spaces. The presence of individuals in high-risk networks increases the risk of violence and involvement in violence through peer influence, shared norms, and retaliatory dynamics, supporting the notion that gun violence is socially patterned, as opposed to random (Lemke et al., 2022; Buggs et al., 2023). Violence exposure, both direct and indirect, also influences the behavioral patterns and predisposes the occurrence of further violent experiences (Semenza et al., 2025).

The diffusion concept of violence highlights the fact that the incidents involving firearms tend to be contagion-like, implying that after a single act of violence, there is a risk of the occurrence of subsequent acts occurring in the same network or community. Such processes can be most particularly observed in group-based situations, where retaliatory and escalation cycles can perpetuate patterns of violence over time (Swanson & Rosenberg, 2023). These dynamics underscore the need to conceptualize violence as a process of interaction and relation.

These processes that involve networks are critical in understanding how to develop specific and efficient interventions that break transmission pathways and minimize clustering of violence. Interventions can be more effective by targeting high-risk networks and how violence proliferates

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through the underlying social processes that perpetuate firearm-related harm and supplement larger structural and community-based efforts (McMillan & Bernstein, 2022).

Table 2: Theoretical Perspectives on Gun Violence

Theory	Key Idea	Relevance to Gun Violence
Social Disorganization	Weak social control	High crime areas (Buggs et al., 2022)
Strain Theory	Economic stress	Youth violence (Bottiani et al., 2021)
Social Network Theory	Violence diffusion	Group-based crime (Lemke et al., 2022)

5. INTEGRATING PUBLIC HEALTH AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE APPROACHES TO GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The increasing appreciation of gun violence as a multifaceted societal challenge has been accompanied by a rise in attempts to combine the perspectives of social health and criminal justice, to emphasize their complementary capabilities in prevention. Population-level risk reduction is prioritized in public health frameworks, and behavioral regulation and deterrence in criminology, forming a natural intersection sometimes called epidemiological criminology. This interdisciplinary approach aims to overcome the gap between knowledge on the allocation of violence and specific interventions to minimize it (Braga, 2022; Lemke et al., 2022). Notably, both disciplines have a similar goal of harm prevention, but the way they accomplish it differs in public health, the focus is on prevention and equity, and in criminal justice, it is on enforcement and responsibility. By combining them, it is possible to respond more holistically addressing both underlying causes and the immediate risk factors of firearm violence.

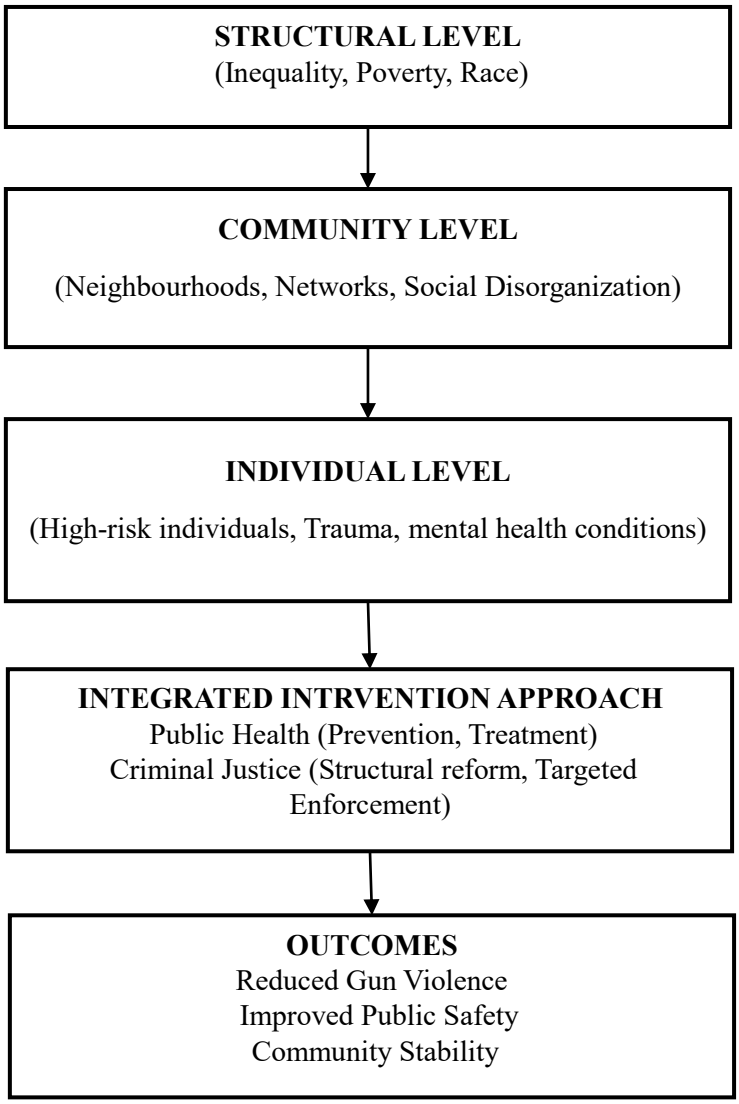


Figure 1: Integrated Public Health and Criminal Justice Framework for Gun Violence Prevention

This figure presents an integrated framework for understanding and preventing gun violence as a multi-level phenomenon. At the structural level, factors such as systemic inequality, racial segregation, and poverty increase exposure to violence. At the community level, neighborhood conditions and social network dynamics shape patterns of risk and diffusion. At the individual level, factors such as trauma and mental health conditions increase vulnerability to both victimization and offending. The framework integrates two complementary systems of intervention: public health

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strategies focused on prevention and treatment, and criminal justice approaches centered on deterrence and enforcement. Together, these approaches provide a coordinated, multi-level strategy for reducing firearm violence.

One of the most interesting points of convergence is the creation of community-based interventions which are a mixture of both community health prevention and criminal justice approaches. Violence interruption programs like those that emulate Cure Violence, like violence interruption programs, work by detecting those at risk and intervening before the violence occurs, treating violence as a contagious disease in groups (Sanchez et al., 2020; Buggs et al., 2023). Such interventions tend to be backed up by larger community-based engagement initiatives, highlighting trust-building, trauma-informed care, and local involvement in violence prevention (Ajayi & Thompson, 2025; Sibo et al., 2025). Moreover, culturally competent crisis intervention and social support networks are essential when it comes to tackling the psychological and social aspects of violence, especially within underserved groups (Gordon et al., 2025; Egbunu & Cudjoe-Mensah, 2025). These methods illustrate the possibility of context-specific and collaborative prevention efforts by combining knowledge on the community level with official prevention frameworks.

Based on this integration, a multi-level prevention framework comes out as an imperative model to deal with gun violence in a holistic approach. This framework works at the structural, community, and individual levels and integrates the use of public health interventions to reduce social determinants and enhance health equity with criminal justice interventions, including targeted deterrence and policy interventions (Rowhani-Rahbar et al., 2022; Swanson et al., 2022). This strategy recognises that prevention needs to be done at multiple levels at once, which means not only alleviating structural inequalities but also disrupted violence cycles and empowering those affected. Finally, a unified approach of incorporating both the public health and criminal justice worldviews is a better and more sustainable avenue toward preventing firearm violence, which is consistent with the modern demands of interdisciplinary and systems-based solutions (South et al., 2022).

7. CRITICAL SYNTHESIS OF EVIDENCE

The available literature on gun violence indicates that there is increased awareness that successful prevention needs to integrate various approaches across disciplines and not just based on single strategies. Both public health and criminology have shown that targeted, data-driven, and responsive interventions based on underlying social conditions are most effective (Braga et al., 2022; South et al., 2022; Cook & Ludwig, 2019). Meanwhile, structural inequalities and exposure dynamics influence patterns of firearm violence and support the necessity of a strategy that can tackle both proximal risk factors and social determinants of firearm violence in general (Semenza et al., 2025; Buggs et al., 2022). This overlap of results pushes to the significance of multi-level and interdisciplinary approaches to violence reduction.

Focused deterrence interventions are among the most endorsed approaches since they combine enforcement and social support to address high-risk people and networks. Such strategies have been shown to bring quantifiable decreases in violence involving guns in various settings, especially when executed with the fidelity and involvement of the community (Braga et al., 2022). Simultaneously, community-based interventions, such as violence interruption and outreach programs, have demonstrated the potential of violence prevention at its origin by disrupting the retaliatory loop and direct work with affected groups (Sanchez et al., 2020; Buggs et al., 2023). These interventions are more effective when supplemented with preventive frameworks that focus on early detection and mitigation of risk, especially in youth and other high-risk groups (Rajan et al., 2022; Swanson et al., 2022). Collectively, these results indicate that both community engagement-based and behavioral targeting-based strategies are core to effective violence prevention.

Nonetheless, the evidence base also demonstrates major constraints and ambivalent results, especially concerning specific policing procedures and gun policies. Although proactive policing can help to decrease crime in certain settings, it is also linked to negative health and social effects, such as stress levels, mistrust towards the police, and disproportionate effects on disadvantaged groups (Simckes et al., 2021; Zare et al., 2025). In the same vein, the efficacy of gun regulations differs significantly, with certain regulations showing the low or inconsistent effect based on implementation and contextual drivers (Rowhani-Rahbar et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2017). The importance of systemic and institutional determinants such as the firearms industry and policy environments in access to weapons and patterns of violence is also noted in broader analyses (Smith et al., 2017; Ashok et al., 2025). These ambivalent results highlight why policy-to-outcomes translation is a complex task and require situational assessment.

Nevertheless, in spite of significant advances, there are still critical gaps in the literature that restrain the elaboration of comprehensive and sustainable solutions. One of the most notable weaknesses is the failure to integrate across the disciplines where public health, and criminal justice approaches tend to be siloed even when they are dealing with the same phenomena (McMillan & Bernstein, 2022; Lemke et al., 2022). Also, longitudinal and causal studies are required to further understand the long-term effects of interventions and the processes by which violence is perpetuated or mitigated (Roman et al., 2025). New literature also indicates that mental health, trauma, and community-level resilience should be included in the prevention models, especially in underserved groups (Ajayi & Thompson, 2025; Gordon et al., 2025; Egbunu & Cudjoe-Mensah, 2025). To fill these gaps, there is a need to move to more integrated, theory-based and methodologically sound research so that one can not only see what works, but also why and under what circumstances.

8. LIMITATIONS

While the present study makes several contributions to the field, there are some limitations. First, the present study uses a narrative review approach, which is prone to selection bias and subjectivity in the identification and synthesis of the relevant literature. Although this type of review is well suited to synthesise learning across the different disciplines covered (public health, sociology, and criminal justice), it lacks the formalised review procedures of a systematic review. As a result, the lack of clear inclusion and exclusion criteria may affect the transparency, repeatability and breadth of the review. Moreover, the inclusion of a subset of high-impact and theme-specific studies, while strategic, may have excluded relevant insights, which may have affected the synthesis.

Second, the current body of research reviewed in this article is primarily based on correlational and cross-sectional study designs, which limit our understanding of the causal links between structural conditions, community dynamics and firearm-related violence. While systematic associations

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are observed across studies, the lack of longitudinal and experimental evidence impairs the ability to establish directionality and long-term effects of these associations. This is especially relevant for the assessment of intervention approaches, including focused deterrence and community programs, which lack evidence for long-term impacts. Therefore, the results need to be viewed with caution, particularly in terms of their implications for policy and practice.

Lastly, the integrated approach proposed in this article is conceptual and has not been tested, which is a critical limitation. Although the framework is rooted in theoretical and empirical research, it remains to be empirically tested for its relevance in different settings and with different populations. Differences across social, economic and institutional contexts may affect the impact of integrated approaches, which highlights the need for future research to test the impact of the integrated approach. A rigorous empirical assessment using mixed-methods, longitudinal and intervention studies will be critical to determine the extent to which the proposed framework can guide policies and practices to reduce firearm violence.

9. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The larger concern of future gun violence research should be the development of interdisciplinary models that can successfully combine public health and criminal justice views to one analytical model. Although there is an increasing appreciation of the interdependence of these domains, most of the available literature is still compartmentalized and does not allow capturing the complexity of firearm violence. To move the research forward in this direction, it is necessary to consider systems-based and multi-level methods of research, which include the consideration of the interactions among structural conditions, community processes, and individual behavior. These models would allow a deeper conceptualization of the intersections of risk factors and the way interventions can be aligned across sectors and have the largest potential impact.

Moreover, there is a pressing necessity to have stronger causal and longitudinal evidence to determine the effectiveness of interventions and develop policy. Most of the existing studies depend on cross-sectional or short-term studies, which do not allow to ascertain long-term outcomes and change mechanisms. To bolster the evidence base, policies and programs, such as firearm regulations, policing strategies, and community-based interventions, need to be rigorously assessed to determine what works, who, and under what conditions. Moreover, the focus of future research must be more focused on policy assessment and implementation research, so that interventions are not only theoretically acceptable, but also applicable and scalable in practice and fair in real-life situations.

10. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Evidence synthesis demonstrates that gun violence requires combined policy actions that would be consistent with the principles of public health to ensure effectiveness. In the case of law enforcement, it means giving priority to data-driven and directed strategies, like focused deterrence and problem-oriented policing, with a limited focus on practices that create harm or distrust in the community. Accountability, precision and fairness should be prioritized in policies, and enforcement should focus on high-risk individuals and locations but not universally. Furthermore, enhancing the quality, accuracy, and timeliness of crime data is crucial to inform the policy decisions and improve the effectiveness of interventions.

In terms of the health policy, the policy initiatives must be directed at preventive measures that will tackle the risk factors, such as structural inequality, violence exposure, and resource inaccessibility. This encompasses investments in community-based initiatives, mental health, and trauma-informed care that have been demonstrated to be vital in decreasing violence and benefiting impacted groups. To establish trust and promote sustainability, community interventions are needed, especially those that involve the local stakeholders and respond to context-specific needs. Finally, policy needs to be efficient at multiple levels, combining enforcement, community health, and community-based strategies to establish an integrated and equitable gun violence prevention system.

11. CONCLUSION

Gun violence in United States needs to be conceptualized as a complex phenomenon that involves a combination of public health and criminal justice systems. The reviewed evidence indicates that firearm violence is not an individual behavior or criminal issue, but a population-wide problem that occurs due to structural inequalities, the actions of communities, and systemic reactions. Sociological approaches note the role played by inequality, social organization, public health approaches lay emphasis on prevention and reduction of risks, and criminal justice approaches which lay emphasis on deterrence and enforcement. Combined, these viewpoints highlight the need to shift to more holistic and integrated concept of gun violence.

To this end, the results of this review underline that integrated prevention is the key to attaining significant and enduring decreases in firearm violence. Combining the strategies that target the community-based programs, the involvement of the community, and the specific criminal justice actions will provide the most prospective route to dealing with the underlying factors and the immediate effects of violence. This kind of strategy demands intersectoral coordination, making investments in evidence-based programs, and ensuring that they are willing to deal with the underlying social inequities. Finally, to keep moving toward effective solutions to gun violence, it is important to build and execute comprehensive, interdisciplinary models that would align prevention, enforcement, and community-based involvement in a single effort.

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