



Division of Public Affairs  
777 Glades Road, ADM 101  
Boca Raton, FL 33431  
561.297.3020 phone

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Gisele Galoustian  
561-297-2676, [ggaloust@fau.edu](mailto:ggaloust@fau.edu)

**FAU Professor and Stoneman Douglas High School Senior  
Collaborate on Trends in Homicide**  
*Persistently High Rates in Baltimore City and Declines in New York City  
Published in 'The American Journal of Medicine'*

**BOCA RATON, Fla. (September X, 2018)** — The vast majority of homicides in the United States are attributable to firearms. The rate of homicide due to guns is about 25 times higher in the U.S. than many other high-income countries. In the U.S., there are approximately 357 million guns among a population of about 323 million. Guns are present in about 1 in 3 households. In addition, gun-related suicide rates in the U.S. are about eight times higher than other high-income countries.

For decades, there have been striking regional variations in deaths from homicide. Professors from [Florida Atlantic University's, Schmidt College of Medicine](#), as well as [Baylor College of Medicine](#), and a high school senior, shooting survivor, and aspiring physician from the [Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School](#) in Parkland, Fla., set out to explore secular trends in homicide rates by comparing two “peer” cities, namely Baltimore City and New York City.

The study, published in [The American Journal of Medicine](#), demonstrates that, since the 1990s, homicide rates in Baltimore City remained high while those in New York City declined dramatically. These trends were evident among both whites and blacks although blacks had higher absolute rates. Collaborators include senior author [Charles H. Hennekens](#), M.D., DrPH, Sir Richard Doll Professor and senior academic advisor in FAU's Schmidt College of Medicine, first author Robert S. Levine, M.D., adjunct professor at Baylor College of Medicine, Rebecca P. Schneid, 17, a senior at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, and [Roger J. Zoorob](#), M.D., M.P.H., the Richard M. Keibert, Sr. professor and chair, Department of Family and Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine. The authors believe that the data from this study raise several major clinical and contemporary medical policy issues.

“Contextual social disadvantage has been associated with increased homicide rates in U.S. cities. The successes in New York City did not happen overnight and occurred despite persistent poverty and skyrocketing income inequalities,” said Hennekens.

“The root causes for the marked differences in homicide rates, overall, as well as among whites and blacks are complex and likely to be multifactorial,” said [Levine](#). “This ‘Tale of Two Cities’ suggests that, if

better understood, however, they might point the way to the abolition of the ‘worst of times’ for Baltimore City as well as many other U.S. cities as they seek to reduce their own high murder rates.”

The homicide rates in Baltimore City and New York City were so markedly different from the 1990s to 2016 despite the fact that they were so similar in the 1980s, even though the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defined the two cities as “peers” according to 19 population based characteristics, which included population size, median household income, overall poverty, percent foreign born, and unemployment.

“Physicians relentlessly pursue improving the health and well-being of every single one of their patients,” said Schneid. “As an aspiring physician and a survivor of the horrific shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, I believe that preventive medicine specialists as well as public health officials can only protect the health of the public with the assistance of our political and community leaders.”

These descriptive data derived from the Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER) provided by the CDC included overall and race specific (white and black) mortality from homicide from birth to 85 plus years of age based on underlying cause of death obtained from death certificates.

Hennekens also stated: “I believe that combatting the epidemic of homicides from firearms without addressing firearms is like combatting the epidemic of lung cancer without addressing cigarettes.”

- FAU -

**About the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine:**

*FAU’s Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine is one of approximately 151 accredited medical schools in the U.S. The college was launched in 2010, when the Florida Board of Governors made a landmark decision authorizing FAU to award the M.D. degree. After receiving approval from the Florida legislature and the governor, it became the 134th allopathic medical school in North America. With more than 70 full and part-time faculty and more than 1,300 affiliate faculty, the college matriculates 64 medical students each year and has been nationally recognized for its innovative curriculum. To further FAU’s commitment to increase much needed medical residency positions in Palm Beach County and to ensure that the region will continue to have an adequate and well-trained physician workforce, the FAU Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine Consortium for Graduate Medical Education (GME) was formed in fall 2011 with five leading hospitals in Palm Beach County. In June 2014, FAU’s College of Medicine welcomed its inaugural class of 36 residents in its first University-sponsored residency in internal medicine and graduated its first class of internal medicine residents in 2017.*

**About Florida Atlantic University:**

*Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU’s world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of critical areas that form the basis of its strategic plan: Healthy aging, biotech, coastal and marine issues, neuroscience, regenerative medicine, informatics, lifespan and the environment. These areas provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU’s existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit [www.fau.edu](http://www.fau.edu).*