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Headline: [WATCH] How we know that stricter gun laws work

Blurb: In Colombia, researchers found that when two large cities made it illegal to carry a gun in public, the murder rate in those places dropped when compared to cities in that country that didn't implement the ban.

- Gun violence steadily declined in South Africa between 2000 and 2011.
- The drop followed a 2000 law that made it harder for ordinary citizens to get a gun permit. Researchers suspect that policies targeting guns specifically drove some of this drop in homicide because gun-related murders decreased more sharply than other kinds of homicide.
- In the Colombian cities of Bogotá and Medellín, a law which made it illegal for gun owners to carry their firearms in public saved 30 lives each month. Here's what it could mean for South Africa.

In 2000, South Africa's government introduced a law which made it harder to get a gun permit.

[Gun violence in the country started to decline.](#)

By 2011, there were less than half the number of gun-related murders than there were in 2000.

People disagree about whether the decrease is a direct result of the stricter gun law.

Some researchers say it was a coincidence.

Others argue that the 2000 law did cause a decline because murders involving guns dropped more sharply than other kinds of homicide.

Is there causal research on gun laws in other countries?

Yes.

One example is Colombia, a country with similar levels of income, police corruption and gang violence as South Africa.

In 2012, two Colombian cities, Bogotá and Medellín, introduced laws which made it illegal for people to carry their guns with them in public.

Elsewhere in Colombia, the right to carry a gun continued.

[After this, Bogotá and Medellín saw a huge drop in gun-related murders compared to other big Colombian cities where it remained legal to carry a gun.](#)

Researchers calculated that the laws in Bogotá and Medellín saved about 30 people a month.

South Africa's pro-gun lobby says people should be able to carry firearms in self-defence, but public health researchers disagree.

Taking away people's guns doesn't necessarily make them less violent, researchers say.

It just makes them less adept at killing one another.

This story was produced by the [Bhekisisa Centre for Health Journalism](#). Sign up for the [newsletter](#).