

UNDERSTANDING SECURE LETHAL MEANS STORAGE AMONG MILITARY FAMILIES FOR IMPROVED SAFETY OUTCOMES

Need - Veteran risk of death by firearm discharge and opioid overdose, both accidental and self-inflicted, is a devastating and reversible cause of death for U.S. service members. 53% of U.S. service members report storing weapons unsecured and 60% not securing prescription medications making service members particularly vulnerable to injury and fatalities.

Vision - We aim to better understand which technique(s) proves most effective from the perspective of the veteran and veteran families to adopting secure storage. Our proposed project responds to the National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide, Strategic Direction 2: Clinical and Community Preventive Services.

Research - We test the effectiveness of outreach campaigns aimed at improved secure storage adoption rates. We analyze messaging techniques and their effectiveness targeting a national sample of U.S. service member and veteran families. All participants receive a coupon for a free lethal means storage safe; redemption rates are compared across groups, and follow-up surveys are collected to self-report data to evaluate the intervention's impact on safe storage adoption.

Impact - Our studies are aimed at increasing knowledge, perceived usefulness, increased parent/guardian conversations about lethal means safety, and frequency of secure storage, with a longer-term objective to improve well-being of the military community.

Who We Are - The UConn Institute for Advancing Research, Methods, and Scholarship (ARMS) in Gun Injury Prevention is an interdisciplinary research center dedicated to disseminating evidence-based research on gun injury prevention. We engage in community partnerships responsive to all groups. Contact Jennifer Dineen at jennifer.dineen@uconn.edu



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