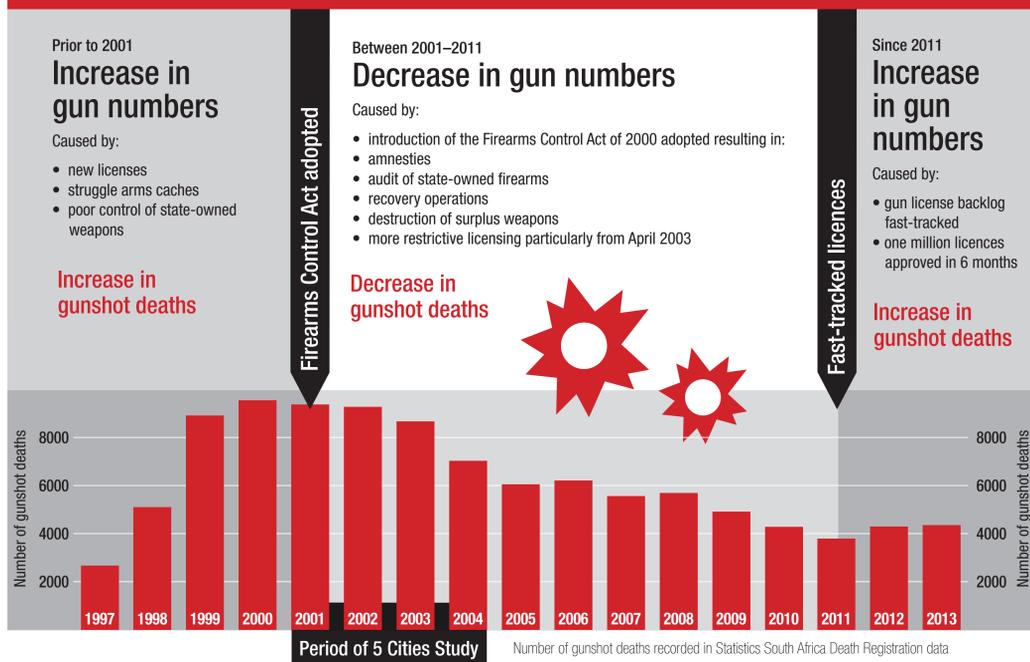


Fewer guns – fewer deaths

A new look into deaths through firearms has shown that the introduction of the Firearms Control Act (FCA) of 2000 coincided with a dramatic decline in gun deaths.

// ... this is compelling evidence that when guns are less accessible – fewer guns and stricter control – fewer gun deaths occur ... //

How gun control policy and law has impacted on gunshot deaths in South Africa



References:

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THE CLEAR INTENTION of the FCA was to reduce the number of firearms, especially among civilians. To achieve this, many guns were destroyed by the police between 2002 and 2005, and stricter requirements were applied in the issuing of licences.

Pro-gun critics of the research findings argue that the FCA was not implemented until 2004, when the regulations were gazetted. In fact, aspects of the act were put in place from 2001. For example, many fewer licences were issued, 55 000 guns were recovered in 2002 and 2003 and many more thereafter – substantially reducing the number of guns in circulation.

A research team led by Prof Richard Matzopoulos (who is also part of a Wits team of scholars led by Prof Brett Bowman) initially used data from mortuaries in 5 cities to

consider firearm and non-firearm homicides from 2001 to 2005.

The most recent study of all gunshot deaths recorded from 1997 to 2013 strongly suggests that FCA-driven gun control led to a 60% reduction in gun deaths between 2000 and 2011.

After 2011, when gun control became more relaxed, gun deaths began increasing again. This is compelling evidence that when guns are less accessible – fewer guns and stricter control – fewer gun deaths occur.

Removing guns does not in itself eradicate the violent tendencies in our society. But it does reduce the potential for deadly conflict, and expands the space for positive long-term policies that will build a safer society. ■

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