

I read with interest, "Dangerous weapons or dangerous people? The temporal associations between gun violence and mental health," by Yu Lu, and Jeff R. Temple. It is my opinion, a fundamental question posed, "have you ever threatened someone else with a gun?" did not consider the circumstance of the participants' response. Thus, invalidating a major conclusion of their study of a sample population over time due to the researchers' bias.

"This study found that individuals who had access to guns, compared to those with no such access, were over 18 times more likely to have threatened someone with a gun, even after controlling for a number of demographic and mental health variables."

It is a logical but unnecessary statement that someone without a firearm or access to one could threaten anyone else with a firearm. This is a moot point and displays the researchers' bias. It seems to be a typical viewpoint from persons in the academy who have little or no practical life experience. It demeans the other positive points of their study.

Pointing the muzzle of a firearm specifically at another person with one's finger on the trigger or firing a warning shot, would threaten someone, and I believe others would agree. However, displaying a firearm does not by itself threaten others. The circumstances of the participants' who answered in the affirmative would need deeper examination of their specific reason to reply affirmative. Using a comprehensive rubric that would include clarifying participants' responses would have eliminated the researchers' bias. Had they used a rubric to probe deeper, such as, 1) self-defense from a threat posed by another or group of individuals, 2) intimidation or threat of another for criminal purpose [such as robbery, murder, etc.], 3) displaying a firearm without aiming or discharging it, and other items would have clarified this fundamental question. Self-defense is an important aspect of their study given, "Indeed, when asked about the reasons for gun carrying, among the 91 participants who provided an answer, 80 (88%) reported that it was because they needed protection or to feel safe." It is the right of every person to defend themselves. This study is flawed to the extent it did not examine the circumstances of "threatening someone."

Basic firearms training for personal defense extensively covers the circumstances and outcomes of discharging a weapon against another person. The study did not recognize this or ask if the

participants who said they had 'threatened someone' had any firearms instruction. Again, this feature reveals the researchers' bias in their fundamental conclusion:

"While an argument can be made that threatening someone with a gun does not necessarily equal gun violence, it is an adequate proxy or precursor to actual gun violence. Taken together, limiting access to firearms, regardless of demographic characteristics, mental health status, and prior mental health treatment, would likely reduce threats made with a gun and gun violence."

Assuming that all sales or transfers between responsible law-abiding adults will increase gun violence or control this activity is beyond the study. It is the opinion of Mr. Temple, not a documented or proven fact. He proposes to regulate lawful firearm transfers and uses this study as the foundation of his argument; however, it is flawed. I support his right to his opinionated argument, but I do not accept his study/premise to support it. He infers that control of access to firearms will reduce violence but he cannot confirm his findings.

I agree with Mr. Temple that the arena of mental health needs more extensive work; however, it should not infringe on others' lawful rights under any guise. If mental health professionals detect a behavior that engenders a threat to others, it is their responsibility under the law to act. As I understand the situation of Texas law on this point, mental health professionals must do so. Perhaps they need additional training and education in ethics and laws pertaining to them.

Gun violence is horrible.

Violent persons do not always change after mental health treatment and they may or will continue to perpetrate terrible acts. Is this the fault of mental health professionals and practitioners? Should they be liable for errors and omissions they make daily when dealing with potential perpetrators of violence?

People are not perfect, and they are not always as noble as Mr. Temple would like them to be. Life is tough and people make choices. Firearm transfer between individuals with no criminal intent or history rises to the level of unnecessary governmental intervention. Restricting exchange or transfer of firearms between law-abiding persons constitutes overreach and invasion of rights. I know of no one who would sell or transfer a firearm to a criminal, or known violent person. I need not do a

background check because I will never sell or give a firearm to such a person. I make reasonable decisions and my government must recognize this.