

Gun laws and “negative deaths”: the facts

Background

- Using statistical modelling techniques, Baker & McPhedran¹ examined firearm-related deaths from 1979 to 2004.
- They found that Australia’s 1996 gun laws did not impact significantly on pre-existing downward trends in firearm homicide.
- No clear conclusions could be drawn about firearm suicides, given corresponding declines in non-firearm suicides.
- Anti-gun lobbyists have tried to discredit Baker & McPhedran¹, claiming that the research is “flawed” because its modelling produces death rates that fall below zero. This is a misleading claim, and shows a lack of understanding about how Baker & McPhedran¹ analysed the data.

No “negative deaths”

- The figures below show the actual and predicted rates of firearm suicide and homicide modelled by Baker & McPhedran¹. Predicted firearm-related death rates from 1997 to 2004 remain above zero.

Figure 1: Actual and predicted firearm suicide rates

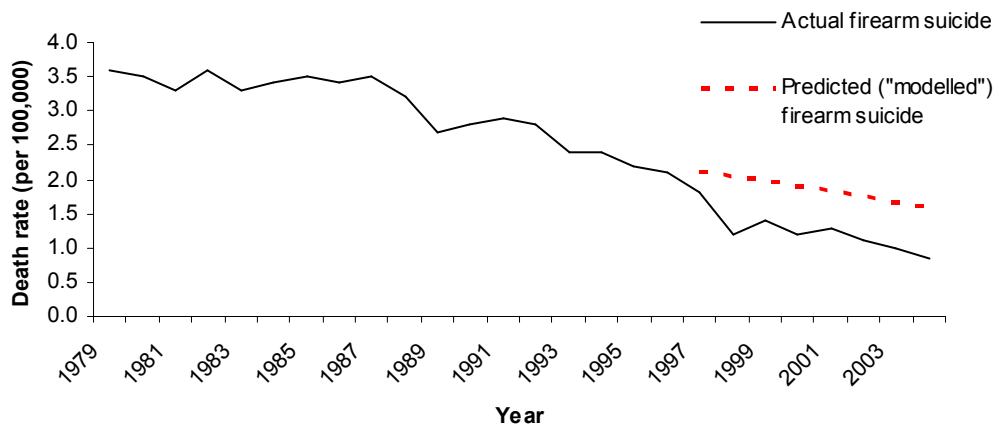
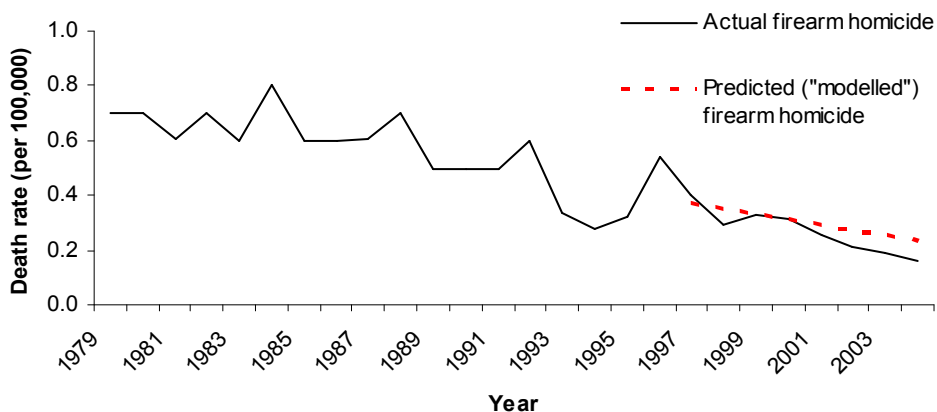


Figure 2: Actual and predicted firearm homicide rates



References

1. Baker, J., & McPhedran, S. (2007). Gun laws and sudden death: Did the Australian firearms legislation of 1996 make a difference? *British Journal of Criminology*, 47: 455-469.