

FIREARM VIOLENCE AND RACISM:

FIREARMS AND RACIAL INEQUALITY **2022**


Instituto **SoudaPaz**
A paz na prática



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CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. FIREARM HOMICIDE	5
II.1 Firearm homicide - victim profile	7
II.2 Racial disparities in victimization at national and regional level	12
II.3 Where do firearm homicides occur?	16
III. NON-LETHAL FIREARM VIOLENCE	21
III.1 Non-lethal firearm violence - victim profile	23
III.2 Profile of non-lethal firearm violence	29
IV. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	38





INTRODUCTION

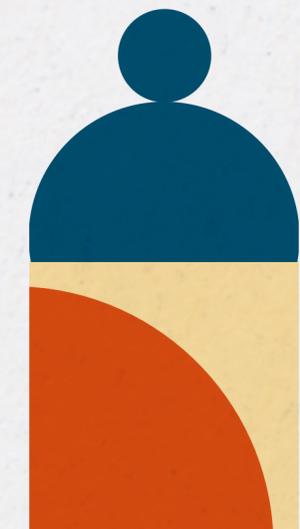


Photo: Mauro Pimentel/AFP

Firearm violence has a profound effect on Brazilian society and the gravity of the problem has been widely denounced by researchers and public managers ever since the 1990s. Studies in the areas of health and public security have highlighted the role firearms play in violent deaths, especially in homicides and other intentional crimes that result in the death of the victim. Assault with a firearm has a high risk of lethality and can have a long-term impact on the physical and mental health of survivors and their families.

This study analyzes data from the Mortality Information System (SIM, acronym in Portuguese) and national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN, acronym in Portuguese) to see what health system data on mortality and admissions for violence can tell us about firearm violence in the country. We sought to provide a detailed picture of firearm violence and the contribution of this type of violence to deaths and injuries, focusing on the inequalities laid bare by the profiles of events and victims.

It is known that violence affects different groups and segments of society differently in Brazil. Various studies have shown deep racial inequality and the overrepresentation of men and young people among victims. Improved data on victim race/color show that the high homicide rates witnessed during the first decade of the twenty-first century were due mainly to a rise in cases among black people and falling rates among the white population, constituting a growing trend of selective mortality.¹ This same trend can be seen in the evolution of firearms homicides, as victimization rates dropped among white people and rose among the black population.² In addition to the disproportionate toll of violence on black people, men and young people, firearm violence also affects vulnerable groups such as women, children, adolescents, older persons,

persons with disabilities, indigenous persons and the LGBTQIA+ community. Our data reveal that the huge racial disparities in victimization also cut across these vulnerable groups.

This portrait of firearm violence lays bare a persistent problem that both reflects and contributes to the perpetuation of the structural inequalities that divide Brazilian society. Considering the current backdrop of regressive gun control policies in the country, this discussion is needed now more than ever.

With regard to methodology, we conducted a descriptive analysis of national time-series data on firearm homicides – taken from death certificates recorded in the SIM – and on non-lethal violence – taken from notification forms for admissions for violence recorded in the SINAN.

¹ WAISELFISZ, J.J. Mapa da Violência 2012: a cor dos homicídios no Brasil. Rio de Janeiro: CEBELA, FLACSO; Brasília: SEPP/PR, 2012.

² WAISELFISZ, J.J. Mapa da Violência 2016: homicídios por arma de fogo no Brasil. Rio de Janeiro: FLACSO, 2015.



FIREARM HOMICIDE

For some time now statistics on violent deaths have revealed the large contribution of firearms to homicides in Brazil. Between 1990 and 2000, an upward trend in homicides was coupled with an increase in the contribution of firearms to these deaths, reflecting both a rise in firearm violence and improved recording of these crimes. As a result, firearm deaths as share of overall homicides³ jumped to 70 per cent in 2000. Since then, this rate has remained relatively stable, peaking at 75 per cent in 2017, the most violent year on record. The fact is, despite fluctuating rates and a recent reduction in the contribution of firearms to overall homicides in 2018 and 2019, the numbers remain alarming, with firearms accounting for at least 70 per cent of homicides in the country.

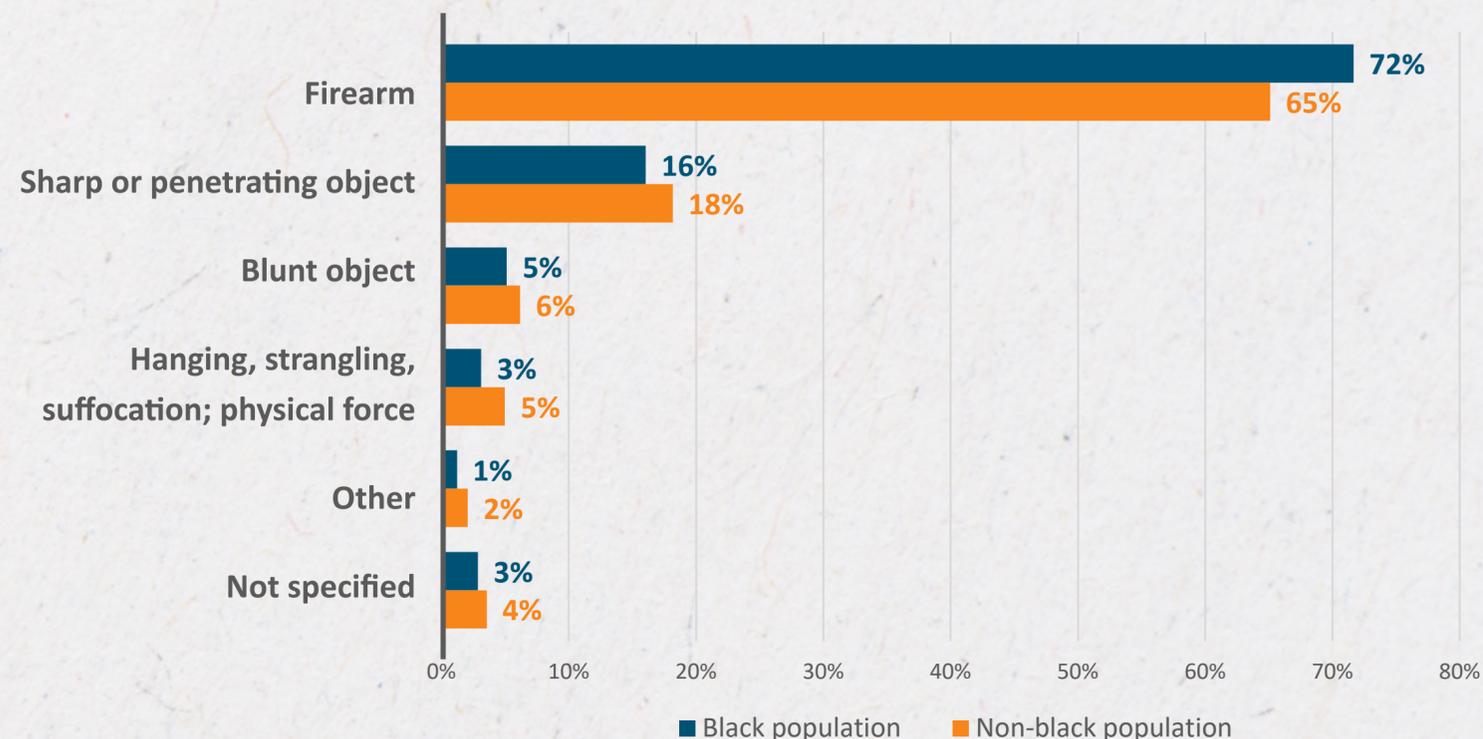
³PERES, MF; SANTOS, PC. Mortalidade por homicídios no Brasil na década de 90: o papel das armas de fogo. Rev. Saúde Pública 2005, 39(1), 58-66.

There were 30,000 firearm homicides in 2019. Black people were disproportionately affected by this crime, historically accounting for the largest share of the country's homicide victims.



Shooting is the most common method of homicide among both black and non-black victims, with higher rates among the former. It is also the most common method among male and female victims, with rates being slightly higher in black men (73 per cent versus 68 per cent in non-black men) and substantially higher in black women (52 per cent versus 42 per cent in non-black women).

Graph 1 - Homicides by weapon/method used and race/color. Brazil, 2019



Source: Mortality Information System (Ministry of Health Surveillance Department)

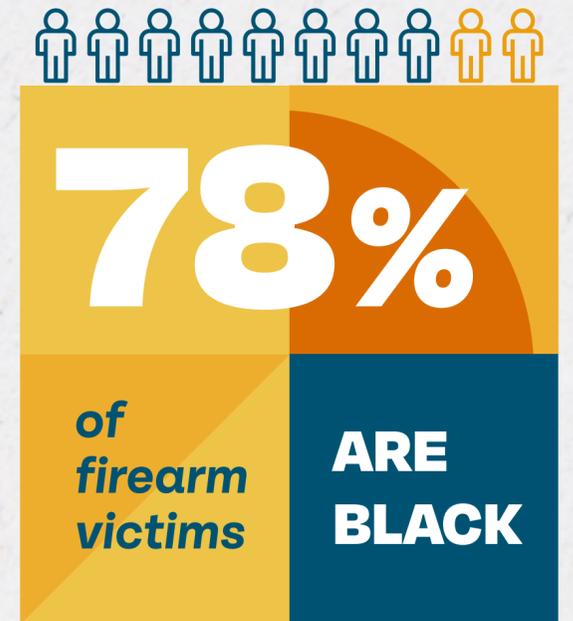
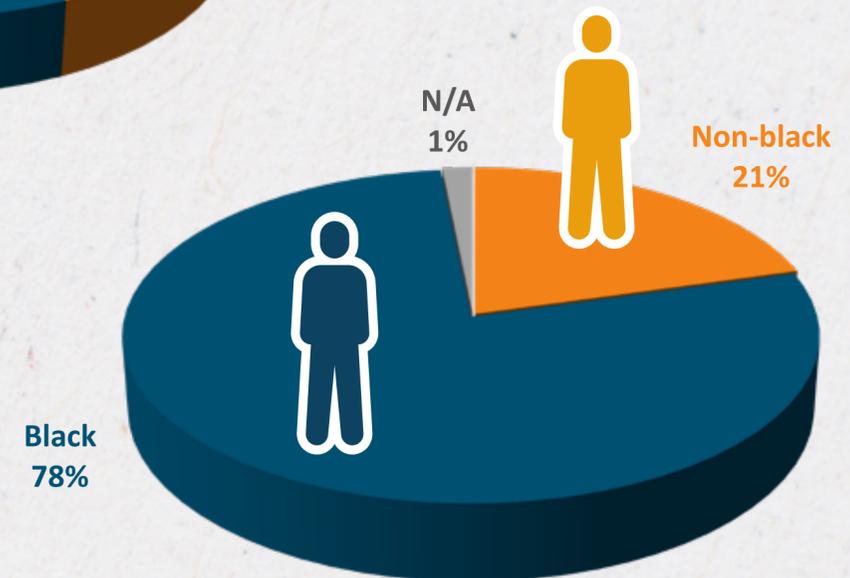
1. FIREARM HOMICIDE VICTIM PROFILE

The firearm homicide victim profile has remained unchanged overtime. In 2019, victims were mostly young people aged between 15 and 29 years (58 per cent), black (78 per cent) and male (94 per cent). Black men represented 75 per cent of the country's firearm homicide victims, compared to non-black men, who accounted for 19 per cent of victims, while black women made up 4 per cent of victims, compared non-black women, who represented 2 per cent. The following graphs show the disproportionate toll of firearm homicide on the black population, considering that black people make up only 56 per cent of Brazil's population but represented more than 78 per cent of victims.

Figure 1 - Population by race/color. Brazil, 2019



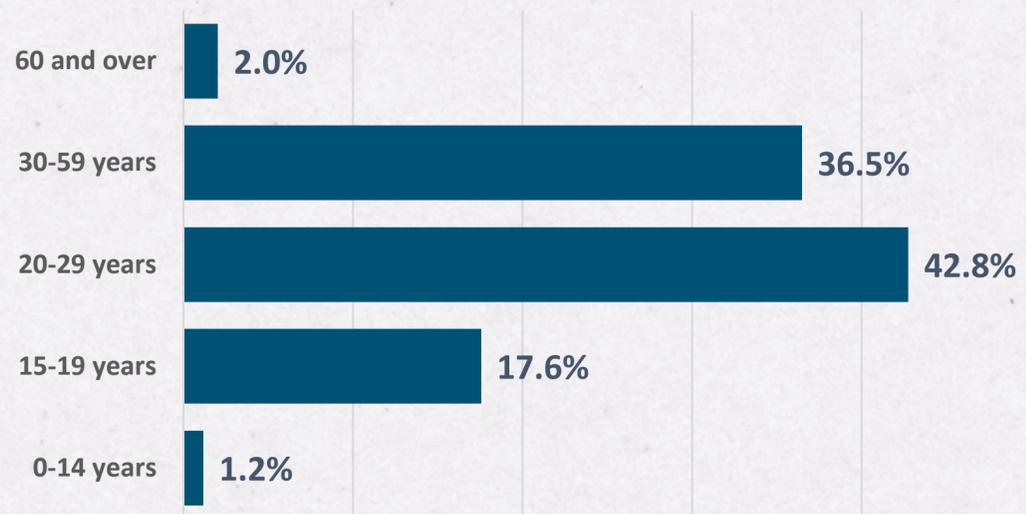
Figure 2 - Firearm homicide victims by race/color. Brazil, 2019



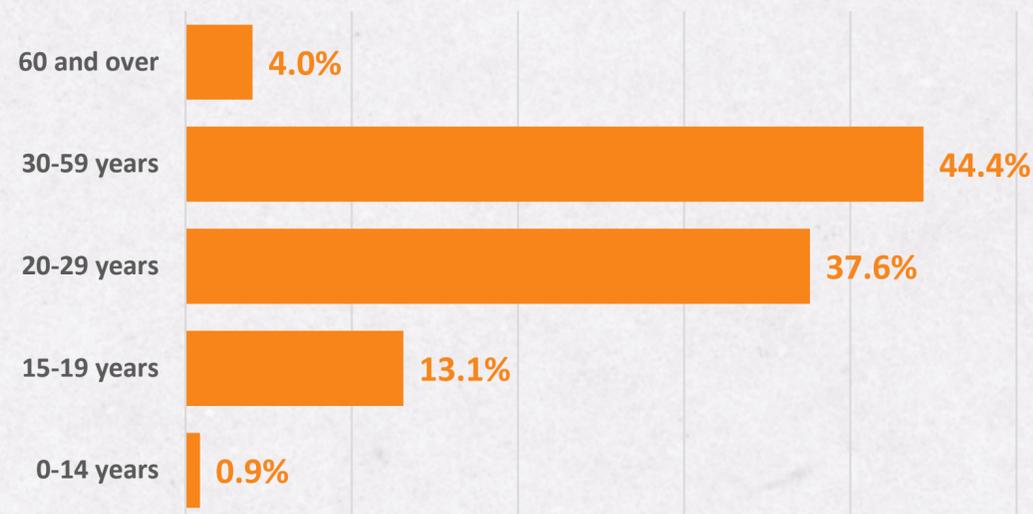
Source: Mortality Information System (Ministry of Health Surveillance Department); National Household Survey

The distribution of homicides by race and age group shows that young people (15-29 years) are particularly vulnerable to firearm violence, making up 61 and 51 per cent of black and non-black victims, respectively.

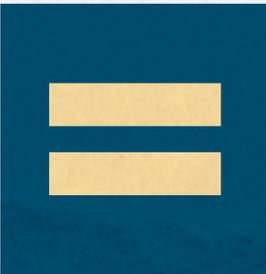
Graph 2 - Firearm homicides among the black population by age group. *Brazil, 2019*



Graph 3 - Firearm homicides among the non-black population by age group. *Brazil, 2019*



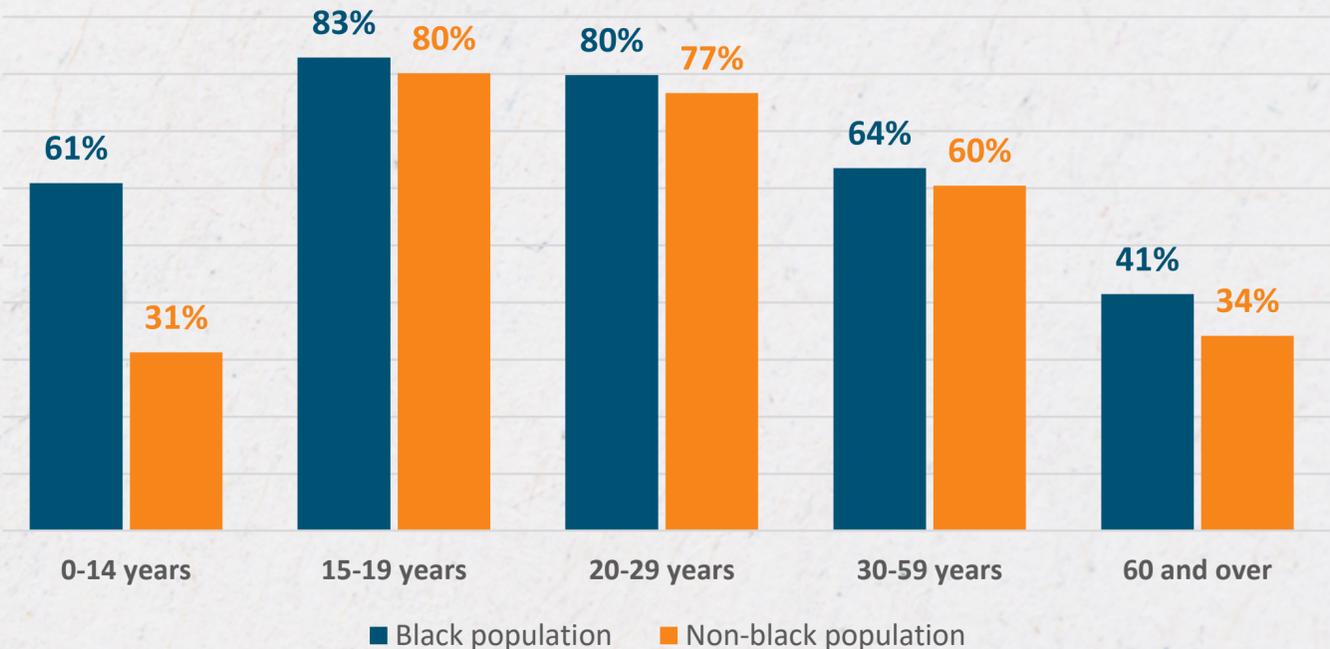
Source: Mortality Information System (Ministry of Health Surveillance Department)



Considering that homicides disproportionately affect young people and that more than 70 per cent of homicides in Brazil are shootings, it is also worth analyzing firearm homicides as a share of overall homicides by victim age group.

Graph 6 shows that firearms are by far the most common weapon used in homicides involving young people in both the black and non-black population. This pattern has remained relatively stable over the last ten years (2010-2019). The share of firearm homicides in overall homicides in black children (0-14 years) is double that of non-black children. It is also worth highlighting that the firearm homicide rate per 100,000 population among black children was 3.6 times higher than in the non-black population in 2019.

Graph 4 - Firearm homicides as a share of overall homicides by race and age group. Brazil, 2019



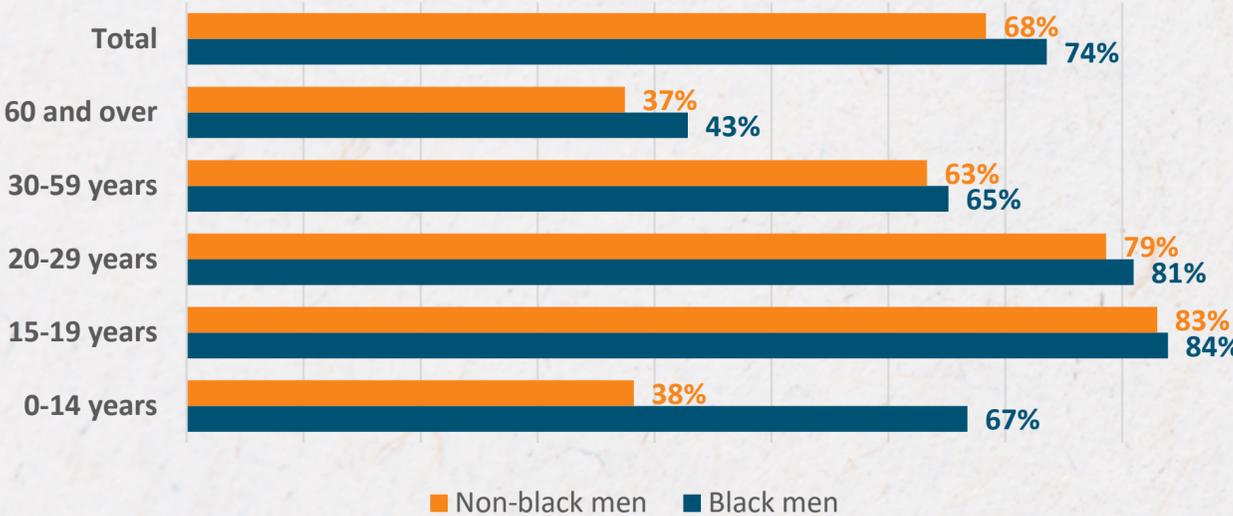
Source: Mortality Information System (Ministry of Health Surveillance Department)



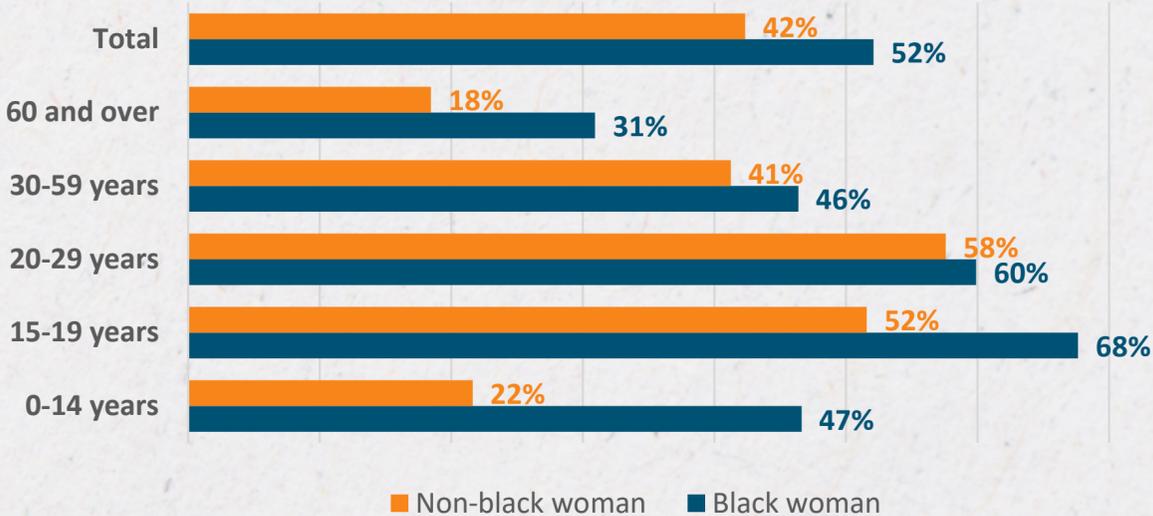
Firearm homicides accounted for the largest share of homicides among both men and women in 2019 (72 and 49 per cent, respectively). Graphs 7 and 8 show that once again racial differences in victimization are more pronounced in the 0-14 age group in both sexes. Among women, the proportion of firearm homicides is higher in black women across all age groups, with substantial racial differences also being observed in the 15-19 year and 60 and over age groups.



Graph 5 - Share of firearm homicides in overall male homicides by race and age group. *Brazil, 2019*



Graph 6 - Share of firearm homicides in overall female homicides by race and age group. *Brazil, 2019*

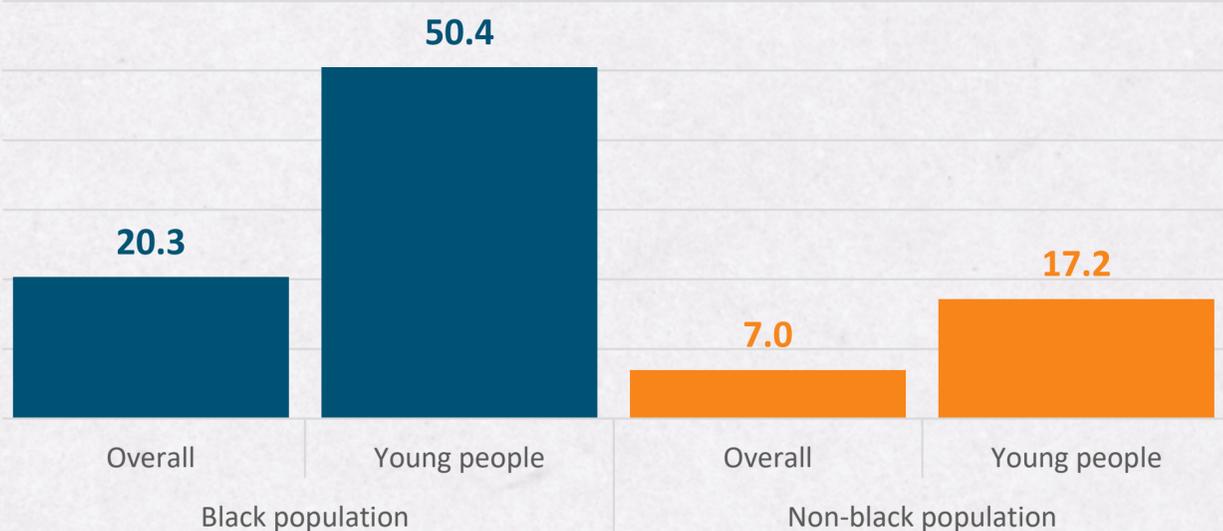


Source: Mortality Information System (Ministry of Health Surveillance Department); National Household Survey

Firearm homicide rates per 100,000 population show that young black people are more vulnerable to gun violence. In 2019, the rate among black people was 3 times higher than in the non-black population, both in the overall population and younger age groups (15-29 years).

Finally, the data show that people with a low level of education are more likely to be victims of gun violence, especially in the black population, with 60 per cent of black victims having completed less than 8 years of education compared to 45 per cent of non-black victims.

Graph 7 - Firearm homicide rates in the overall and young population by race. Brazil, 2019 (per 100,000 population)



Source: Mortality Information System (Ministry of Health Surveillance Department); National Household Survey



2. RACIAL DISPARITIES VICTIMIZATION

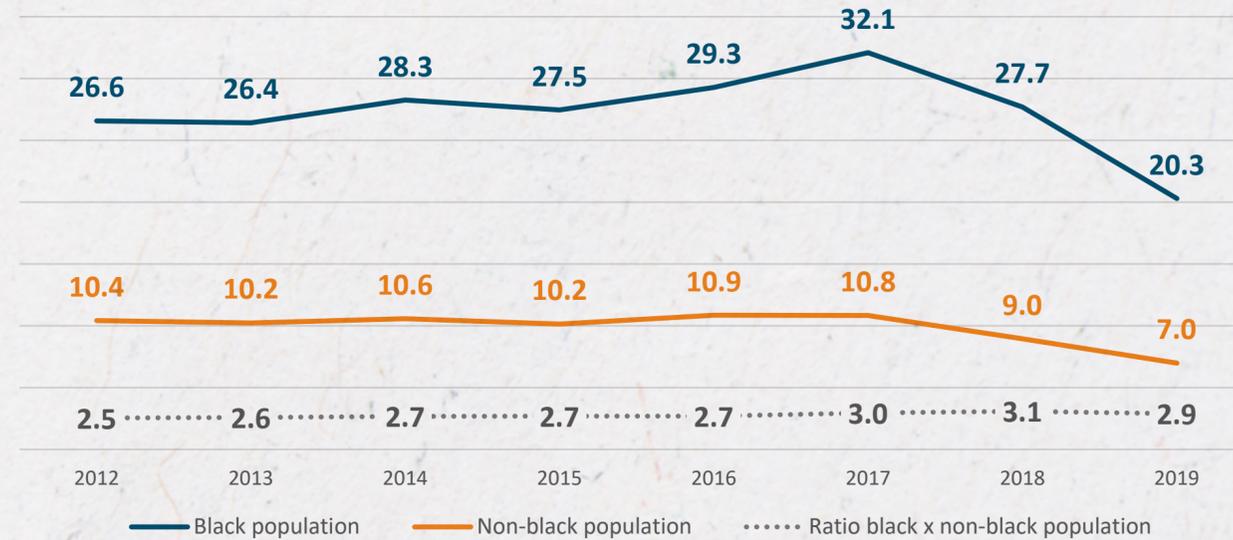
at national and regional level

Data for the period 2012 to 2019 show that, despite variations over time and a recent reduction in firearm homicides, racial disparities in victimization persist across the country. Black people were more likely

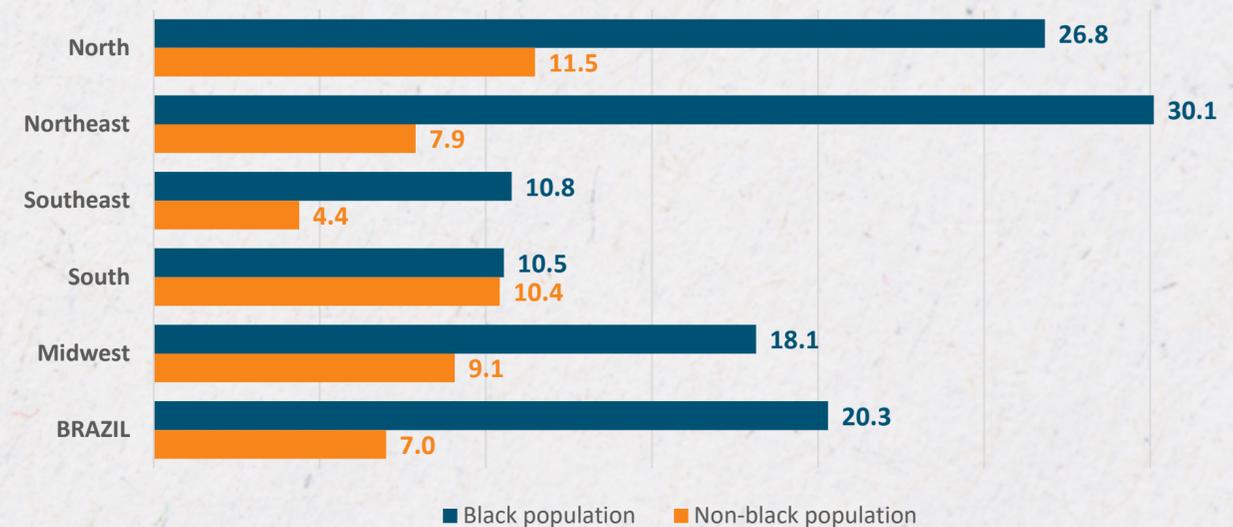
to be victims in all regions except the South, where rates were practically the same.

Disparities were most pronounced in the **Northeast**, where the **firearm homicide rate was almost 4 times higher among black people** in 2019, followed by the Southeast (2.5 times), North (2.3 times) and Midwest (2 times).

Graph 8 - Firearm homicide rates in the black and non-black population, Brazil 2012-2019 (per 100,000 population)



Graph 9 - Firearm homicide rates in the black and non-black population, Brazil and regions 2019 (per 100,000 population)



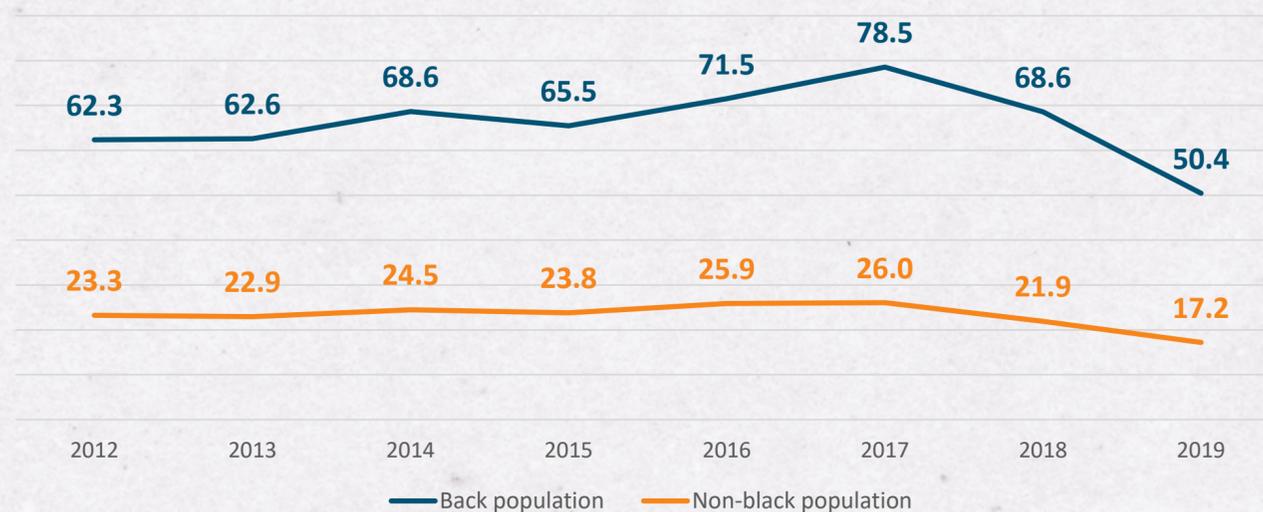


racial disparities in victimization

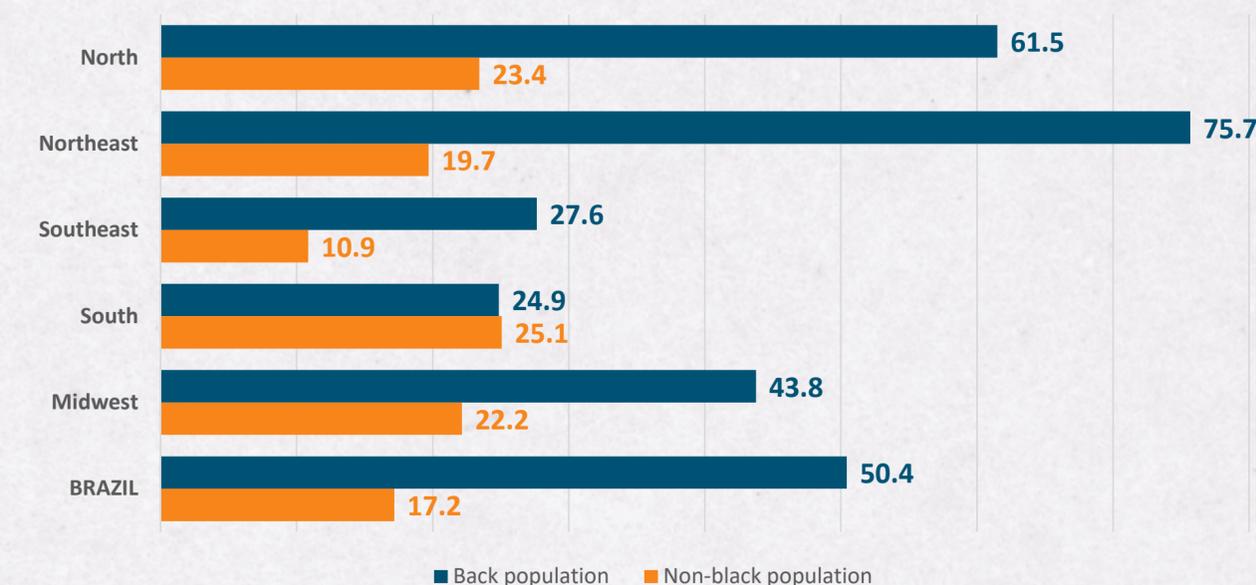
The same pattern of racial disparity in victimization can be observed in younger age groups, with the national firearm homicide rate in the 15 to 29 age group being almost 3 times higher among the black population.



Graph 10 - Firearm homicide rates in the young population by race/color, Brazil 2012-2019 (per 100,000 population)



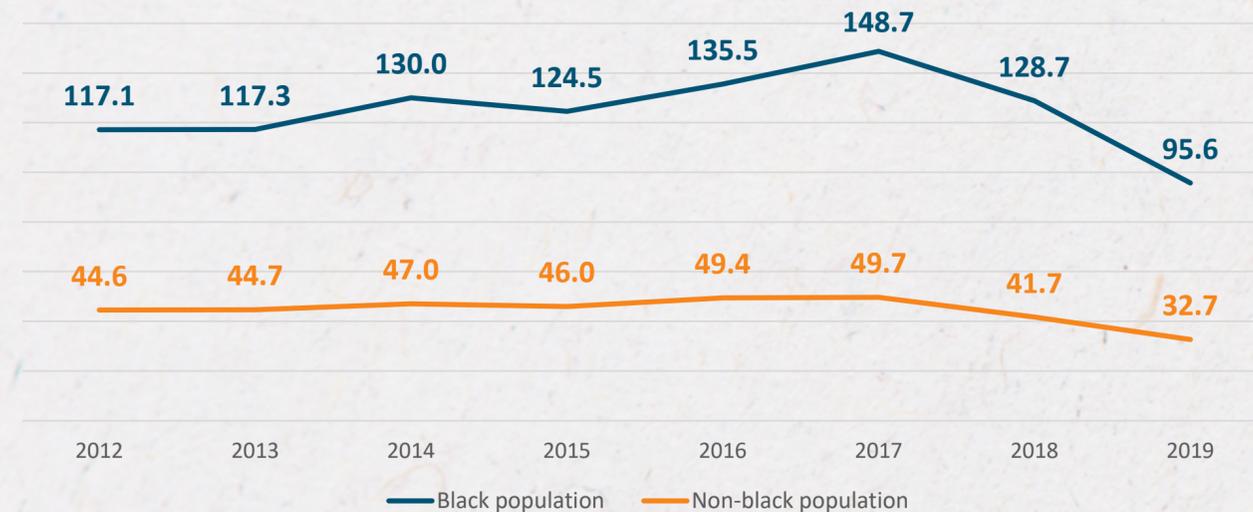
Graph 11 - Firearm homicide rates in the young population by race/color, Brazil and regions 2019 (per 100,000 population)



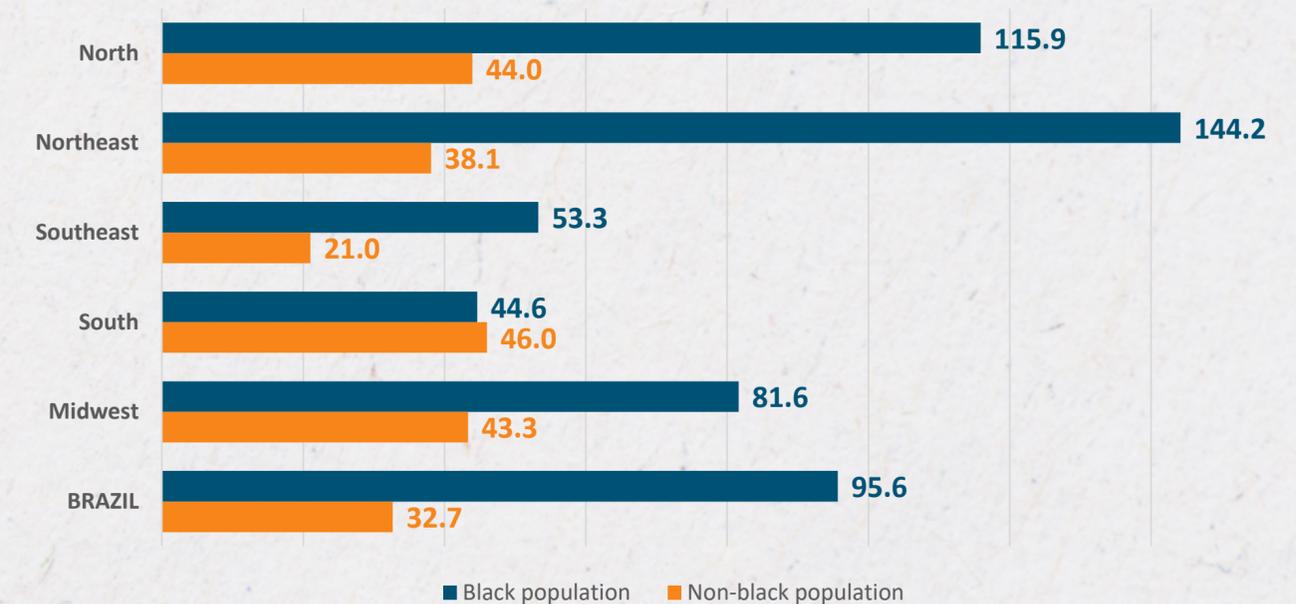
Between 2012 and 2017, the firearm homicide rate rose much faster among black young males than in non-black young males, peaking at 148.7 per 100,000 population in 2017. In 2019, the rate among black young males stood at 95.6 per 100,000 population, which is almost 3 times higher than in non-black young males (32.7) and 6.5 times higher than in the overall population (14.7 data not shown). This phenomenon is denounced by social movements as the “genocide” of Brazil’s black youth.



Graph 12 - Firearm homicide rates in the young male population by race/color, Brazil 2012-2019 (per 100,000 population)



Graph 13 - Firearm homicide rates in the young male population by race/color, Brazil and regions 2019 (per 100,000 population)



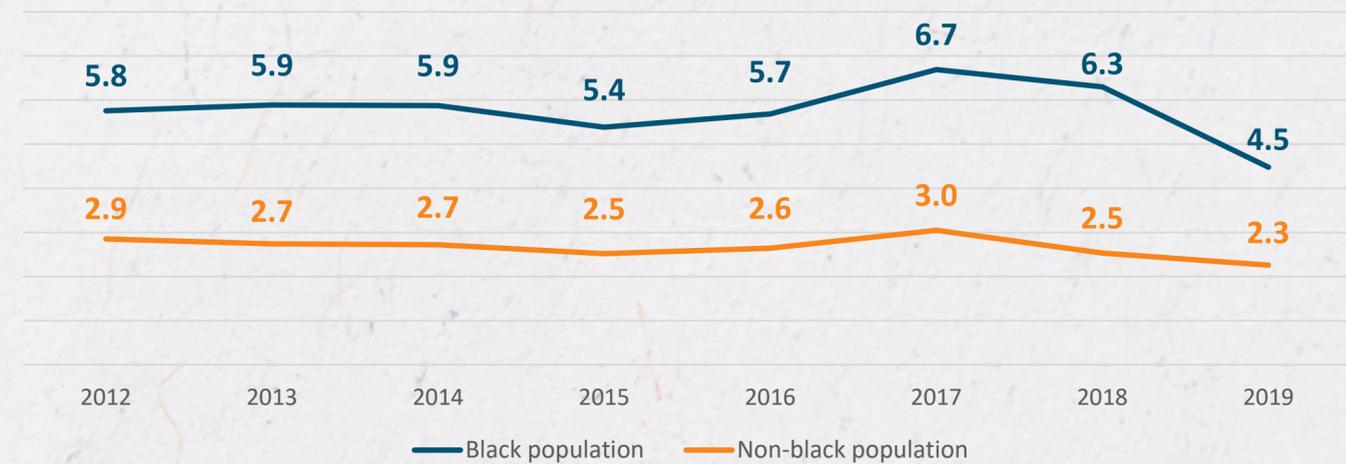
Source: Mortality Information System (Ministry of Health Surveillance Department); National Household Survey



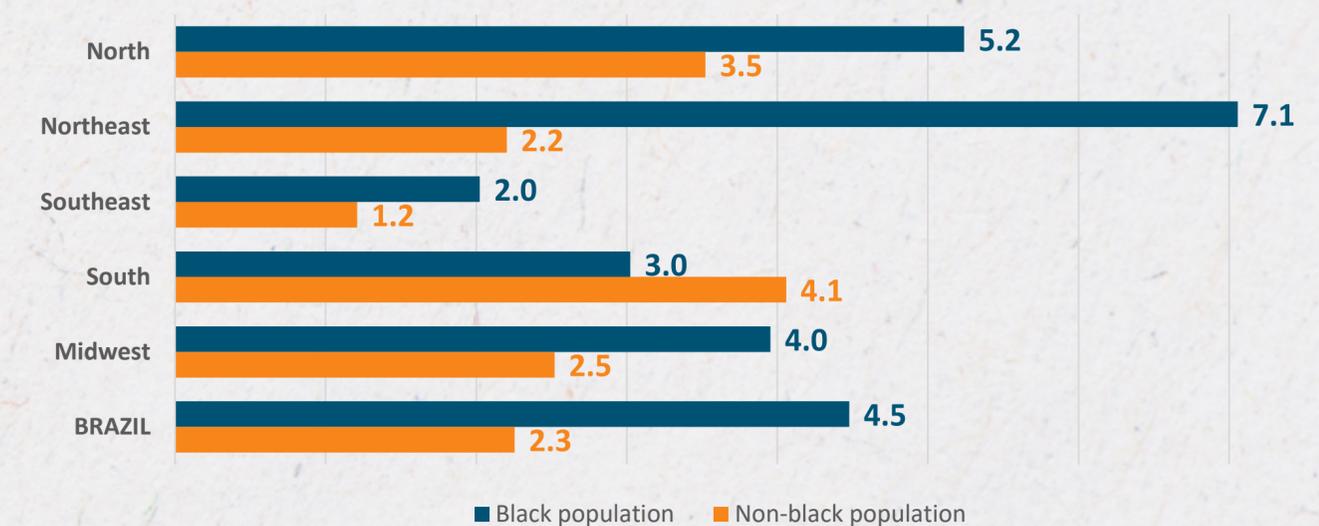
This pattern of racial disparity in victimization repeats itself in young women. Although rates are much lower in this group, black young women were more likely to be victims in all regions except the South, where the rate was slightly higher among non-black young women.

racial disparities in victimization

Graph 14 - Firearm homicide rates in the young female population by race/color, Brazil 2012-2019 (per 100,000 population)



Graph 15 - Firearm homicide rates in the young female population by race/color, Brazil and regions 2019 (per 100,000 population)



3. WHERE DO FIREARM HOMICIDES OCCUR?

Given the lack of information on the context and motive of murders in the country⁴, an important piece of data produced by the Ministry of Health is the place of occurrence of the homicide. The most common location is on a public street, followed by the home. The data show that the proportion of victims killed on a public street was higher in black people in 2019 (54 per cent versus 48 per cent of non-black victims), while the proportion of victims killed in the home was higher in non-black people (16 per cent versus 11 per cent among black people).

Table 1 - Firearm homicides in the black population by place of occurrence. Brazil 2012-2019

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
The home	7%	8%	8%	9%	9%	10%	10%	11%
Street, road	52%	54%	53%	55%	54%	58%	56%	54%
School, sports facility	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Farm	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other	6%	7%	7%	8%	8%	9%	9%	9%
Information N/A	31%	29%	29%	26%	26%	21%	21%	23%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 2 - Firearm homicides in the non-black population by place of occurrence. Brazil and regions 2019

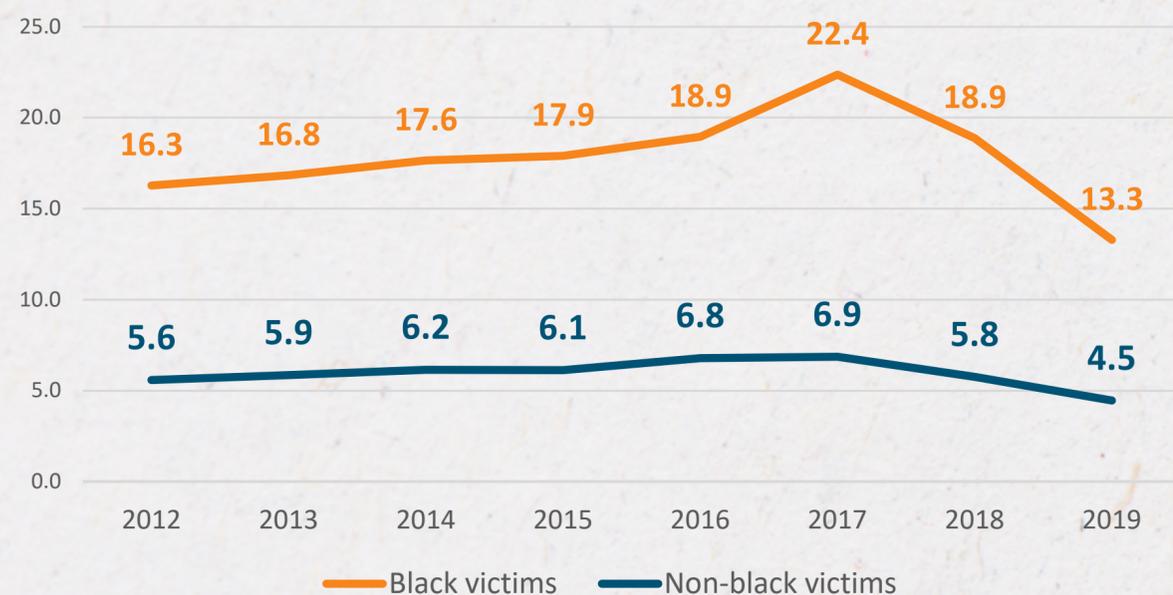
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
The home	11%	12%	12%	13%	13%	13%	14%	16%
Street, road	44%	47%	48%	48%	49%	50%	50%	48%
School, sports facility	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Farm	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other	7%	8%	9%	10%	10%	12%	12%	13%
Information N/A	35%	31%	30%	27%	25%	23%	22%	21%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

⁴ Besides resulting in impunity for crimes against life, lack of perpetrator accountability, and non-fulfillment of the victim's right to justice, low crime clearance rates hamper the production of quality data on the circumstances of homicides and victim profile, leading to a vicious circle of data gaps, which in turn hinders efforts to improve investigations and crime prevention policy planning. A study of homicide clearance capacity in Brazil undertaken by Instituto Sou da Paz shows that the average clearance rate across the 17 states that provided data is 44%, ranging between 12% and 89% (Instituto Sou da Paz. Mapping Impunity - Why Brazil Needs a Homicide Clearance Rate. 2021, available at <https://soudapaz.org/o-que-fazemos/conhecer/pesquisas/politicas-de-seguranca-publica/control-de-homicidios/?show=documentos#5529>)

where do firearm homicides occur?

While both black and non-black people were more likely to be victimized outside the home, the proportion of killings in this setting was 3 times higher among black victims. This difference was even greater in 2017 and 2018, when the rate was 3.3 times higher among this group.

Graph 16 - Firearm homicides rates outside the home by race/color, Brazil 2012-2019 (per 100,000 population)



Although to a lesser extent, the same pattern can be observed when it comes to homicides committed in the home, with black people being 2 times more likely to be killed in their home than white people. This pattern remains the same throughout the time series.

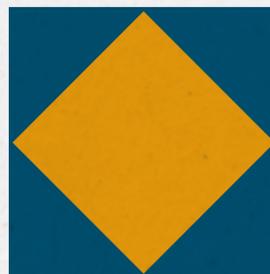
Graph 17 - Firearm homicides rates in the home by race/color, Brazil 2012-2019 (per 100,000 population)



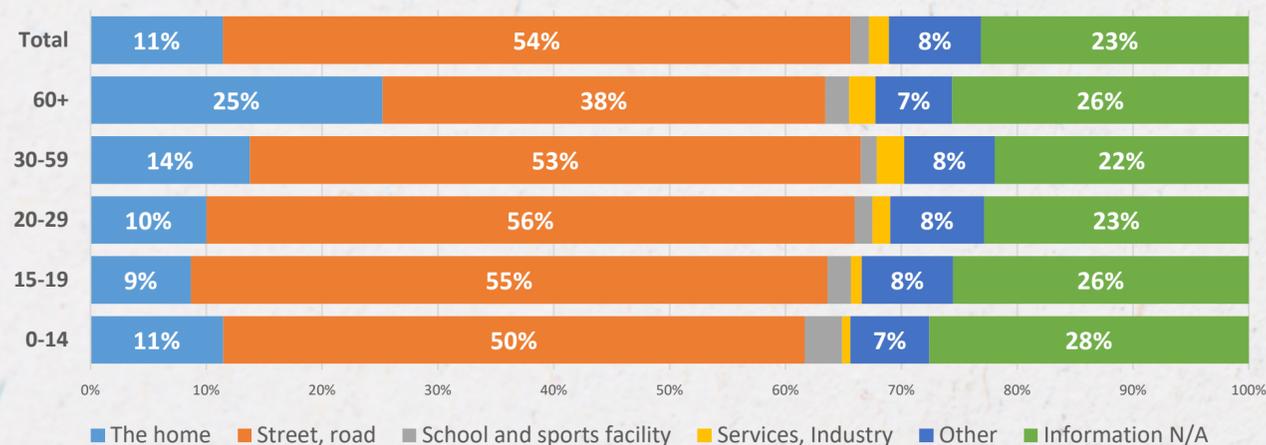
Source: Mortality Information System (Ministry of Health Surveillance Department); National Household Survey

where do firearm homicides occur?

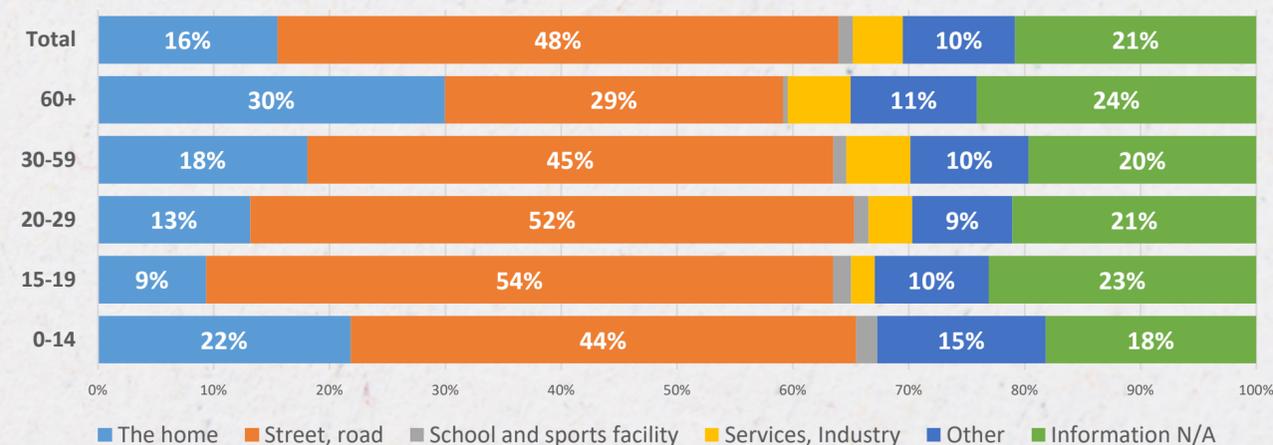
When it comes to age, the most common place of occurrence is on a public street across all age groups in both racial groups, except for non-black older persons, where 30 per cent of homicides were committed in the home and 29 per cent on a public street. It is noteworthy that the proportion of firearm homicides without information on place of occurrence is substantially higher among black children than in non-black children.



Graph 18 - Firearm homicides involving black victims by place of occurrence and age group. Brazil, 2019



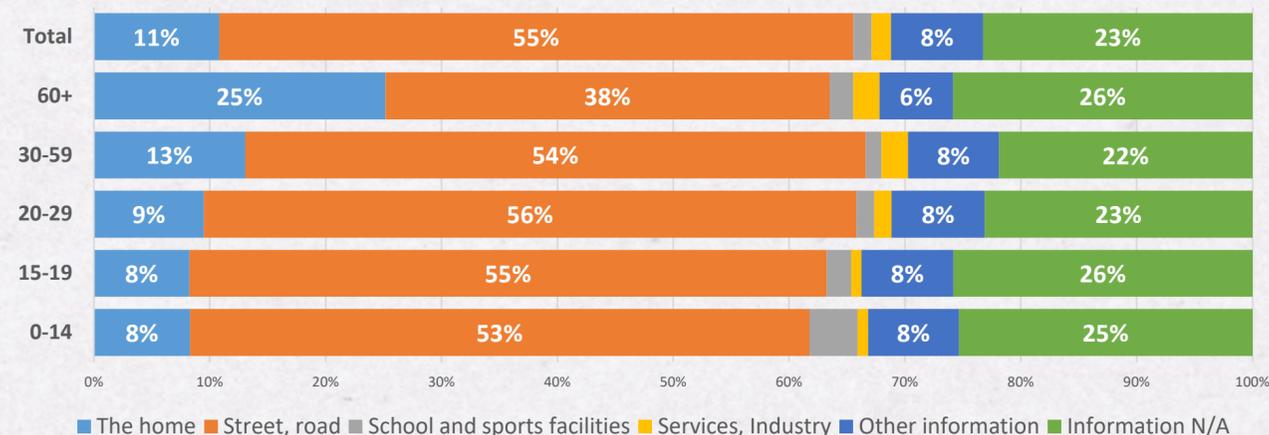
Graph 19 - Firearm homicides involving non-black victims by place of occurrence and age group. Brazil, 2019



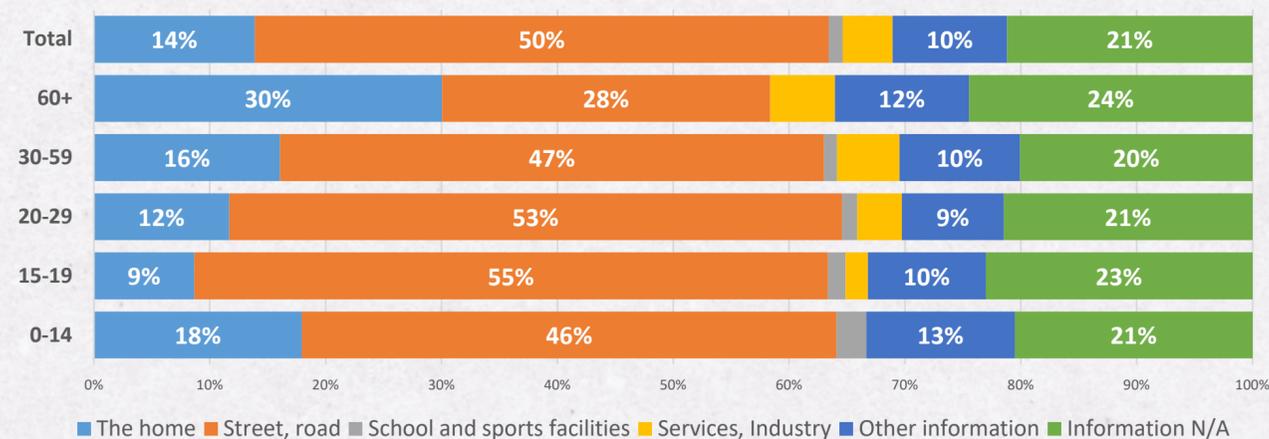
Source: Mortality Information System (Ministry of Health Surveillance Department)

where do firearm homicides occur?

Graph 20 - Firearm homicides involving black victims by place of occurrence and age group. Brazil, 2019



Graph 21 - Firearm homicides involving non-black victims by place of occurrence and age group. Brazil, 2019



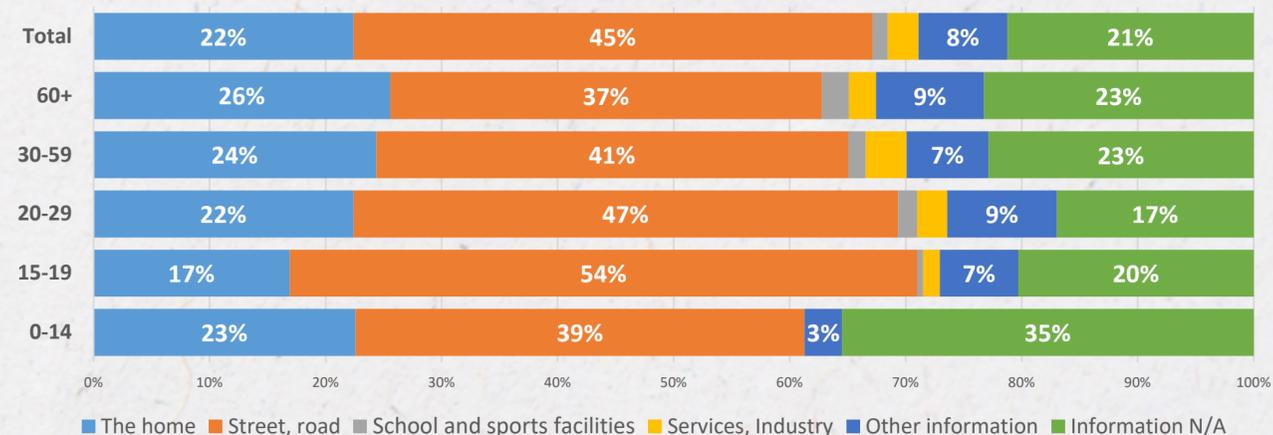
Source: Mortality Information System (Ministry of Health Surveillance Department)

When the data is broken down by gender, homicides involving men follow pretty much the same pattern in both racial groups.

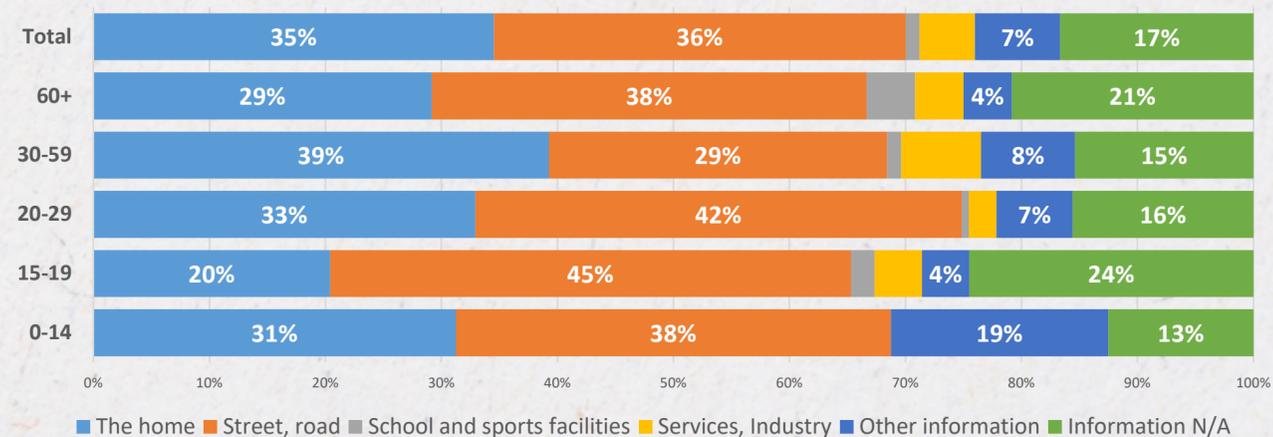
where do firearm homicides occur?

The overall proportion of homicides committed in the home was substantially higher among women than in men in both racial groups. However, the most common place of occurrence among black women was on a public street (45 per cent). This proportion was particularly high in the 15-19 age group. It is worth noting however that one-quarter of homicides were committed in the home in the 30-59 and 60 and over age groups. In non-black women the proportion of homicides committed in the home and on a public street were virtually the same overall (35 per cent versus 36 per cent, respectively), while in the 30 to 59 age group, 39 per cent of the victims were killed in a house compared to 29 per cent on a public street.

Graph 22 - Firearm homicides involving black victims by place of occurrence and age group. Brazil, 2019



Graph 23 - Firearm homicides involving non-black victims by place of occurrence and age group. Brazil, 2019



Source: Mortality Information System (Ministry of Health Surveillance Department)



NON- LETHAL FIREARM VIOLENCE

Data on cases of violence recorded by the national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN) reveal the magnitude of non-lethal firearm violence and provide valuable information on victim profile.

For recording purposes, the SINAN adopts the concept proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO), which defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, against another person or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation”. Underpinned by this concept, the SINAN uses the typology of violence proposed by the WHO.⁵



⁵ Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department. Violence and Accident Surveillance: manual for reporting interpersonal and self-directed violence. 2nd edition. Brasília-DF, 2016. 2nd edition. Brasília-DF, 2016, p. 23-24. There are three broad categories of violence according to the characteristics of those committing the violent act: self-directed violence, interpersonal violence (family/intimate partner or community violence) and collective violence (violence inflicted by larger groups such as states, organized political groups, militia groups and terrorist organizations). This study focuses on interpersonal violence.



non-lethal firearm violence

The number of recorded cases of violence has increased over the period 2010-2019 as the coverage of the SINAN has expanded, reaching 405,000 cases in 2019, 69 per cent of which were interpersonal violence and 31 per cent self-directed violence. In 2011, the recording of certain types of violence, including domestic and sexual violence and violence committed against specific groups, became mandatory throughout the country, leading to a progressive increase in the number of recorded cases.⁶

There were on average 9,000 recorded cases of non-lethal firearm violence per year during the period 2012 to 2019, of which 90 per cent were cases of interpersonal violence. This analysis focuses on interpersonal violence; that is, intentional acts of violence committed against a person by a third party, thus excluding self-directed violence.

Graph 24 - Number of recorded cases of interpersonal and self-directed violence. *Brazil, 2019*



Graph 25 - Number of recorded cases of interpersonal and self-directed firearm violence. *Brazil, 2019*



Source: Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)

⁶ Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department. Violence and Accident Surveillance: manual for reporting interpersonal and self-directed violence. 2nd edition. Brasília-DF, 2016.

1. NON-LETHAL FIREARM VIOLENCE VICTIM PROFILE

The data show that black people were disproportionately affected by interpersonal violence in 2019. Racial disparities in firearm violence were even more pronounced, with black people accounting for 65 per cent of victims. When cases without information on race/color are excluded, this proportion is 70 per cent.

Figure 3 - Number of recorded cases of violence by race/color. Brazil, 2019

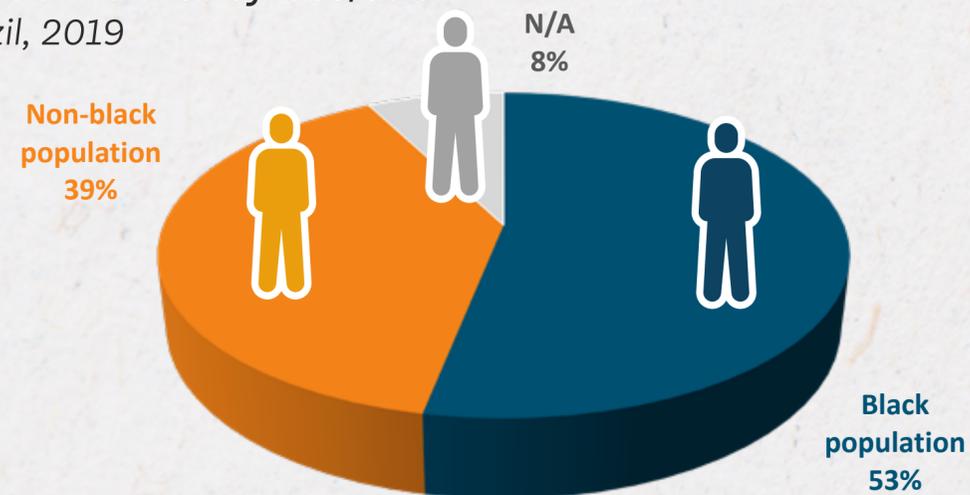
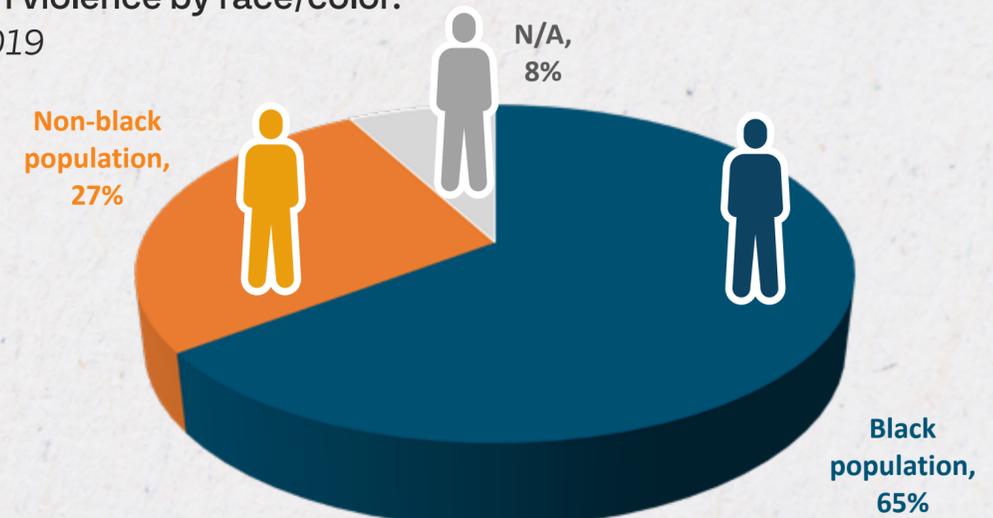


Figure 4 - Number of recorded cases of firearm violence by race/color. Brazil, 2019



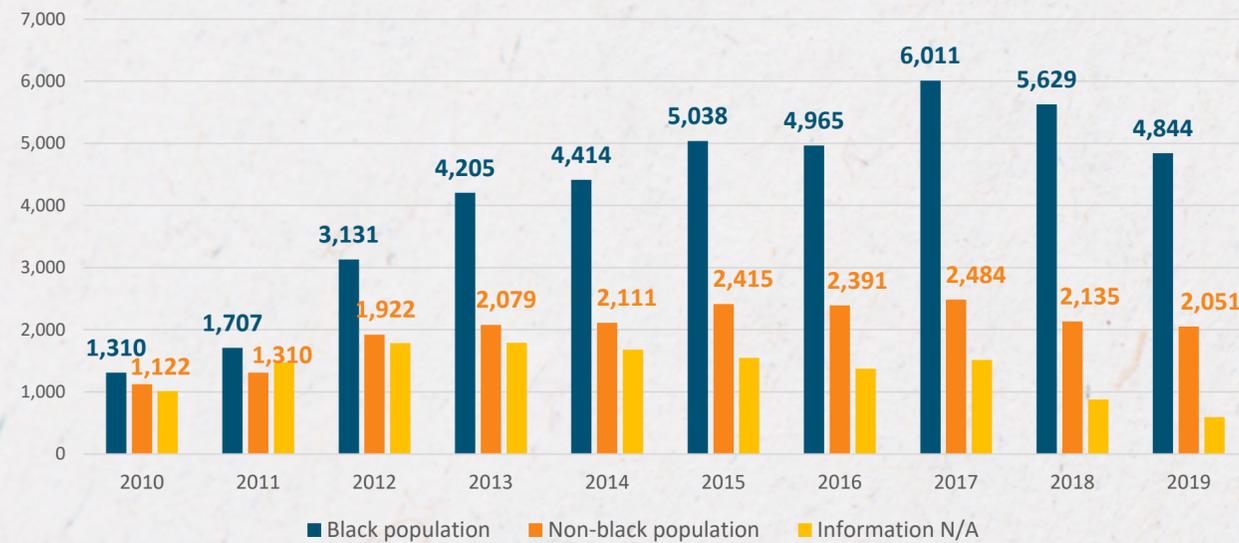
Source: Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)

Black people accounted for the largest share of victims of non-lethal firearm violence in each year between 2010 and 2019, with the proportion of black victims gradually climbing as the coverage of the SINAN expanded and number of cases without information on race/color declined, peaking in the last two years of the time series.

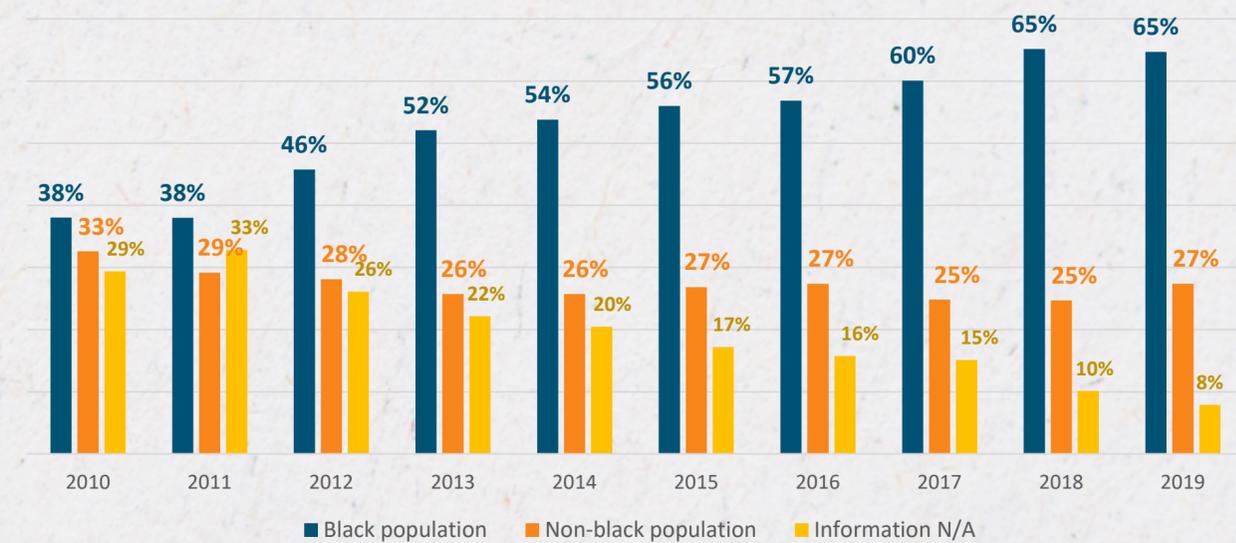
non-lethal firearm violence | victim profile



Graph 26 - Number of recorded cases of firearm violence by race/color. Brazil, 2010-2019



Graph 27 - Proportion of recorded cases of firearm violence by race/color. Brazil, 2010-2019 (%)



Source: Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)

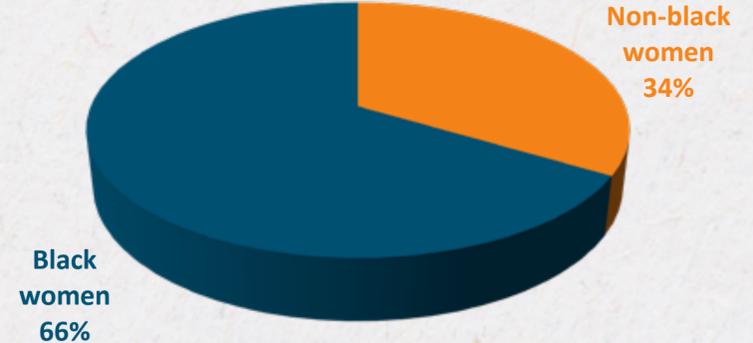
SINAN records acts of violence against vulnerable groups such as women, children and adolescents, indigenous peoples and the LGBTQIA+ community, meaning that there are gaps in information on violence against men. Women accounted for the largest share of victims (72 per cent) because the recording of violence against this group is mandatory regardless of type of violence and age group. Besides the types de violence that must be notified for both men and women⁷, the recording of community violence against males is mandatory only for acts committed against specific groups: children and adolescents, older persons, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and the LGBTQIA+ community. Violence against adult men who do not fall within these criteria is therefore not included in the system.

The data on firearm violence show that women accounted for 45 per cent of victims; however, men represent the largest share of victims (55 per cent), revealing the heavy toll that gun violence takes on this group⁸. Deep racial disparities in victimization were observed in both sexes. Figures 5 and 6 show that these disparities are more pronounced in men.

Figure 5 - Recorded cases of firearm violence against men by race/color. Brazil, 2019



Figure 6 - Recorded cases of firearm violence against women by race/color. Brazil, 2019 (%)



⁷ Family/domestic, sexual and self-directed violence, people trafficking, slave labor, child labor, torture, legal intervention and homophobic violence against men and women of all ages (Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department. Violence and Accident Surveillance: manual for reporting interpersonal and self-directed violence. Brasília-DF, 2016). The present study does not include cases of self-directed violence (suicide attempts and self-harm).

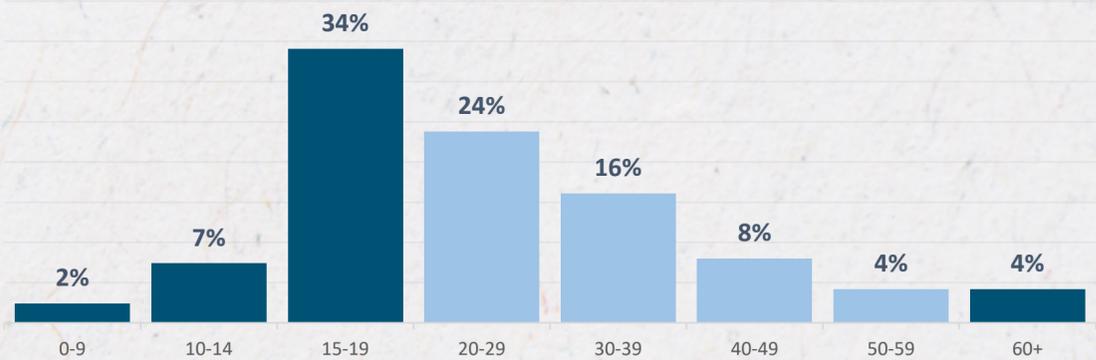
⁸ Considering that cases of community violence against men aged 20-59 who do not fall within the vulnerable groups mentioned above are not included in the SINAN.

Source: Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)

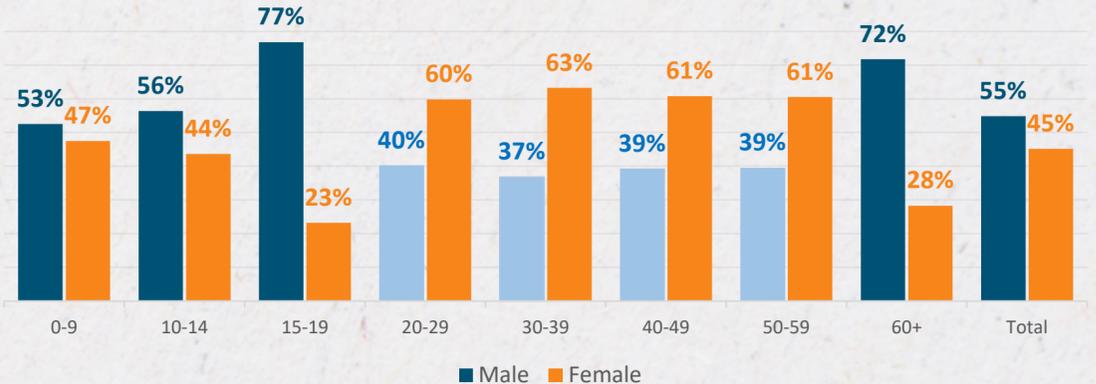
Fifty-eight per cent of victims of firearm violence were aged between 15 and 29 years, with teenagers aged between 15 and 19 accounting for the largest share (34 per cent) of victims (Graph 28).

The breakdown of recorded cases of firearm violence by age group and gender shows adolescent victims were mostly male. The data reveal substantial gender differences in the 15-19 and 60 and over age groups, in which 77 and 72 per cent of victims, respectively, were male (Graph 29). This may be partially explained by the fact that, as mentioned above, the recording of community violence against men is mandatory only for cases involving vulnerable groups such as children, adolescents and older persons.

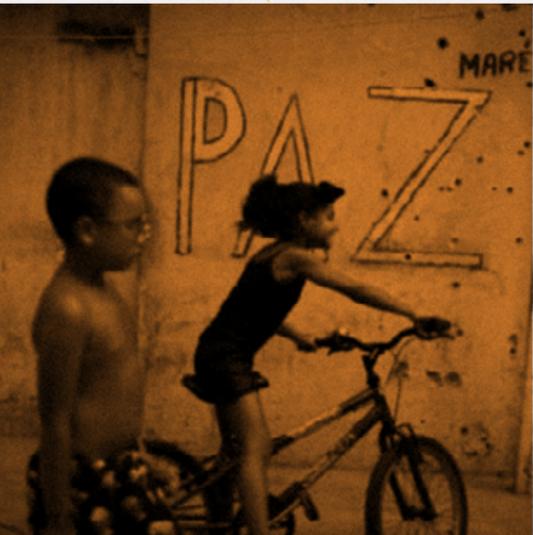
Graph 28 - Recorded cases of firearm violence by age group. Brazil, 2019



Graph 29 - Recorded cases of firearm violence by age group and gender. Brazil, 2019



Source: Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)
 Note: Records of violence against men aged 20-59 do not include all cases as the recording of community violence against men is mandatory only for cases involving the specific vulnerable groups mentioned above.



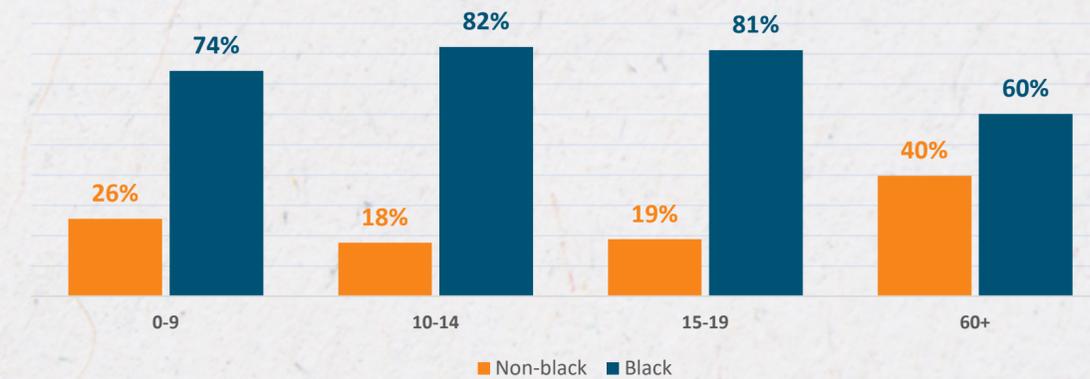
The data on the age groups for which violence reporting is mandatory reveal huge racial disparities among children and adolescents, with black teenagers accounting for more than 80 per cent of victims. This pattern repeats itself in the older age group, with black people representing 60 per cent of cases.⁹

Among women, for whom recording is mandatory for all types of violence and age groups, racial disparities were observed in all age groups. These disparities are more pronounced among children, adolescents and young women.

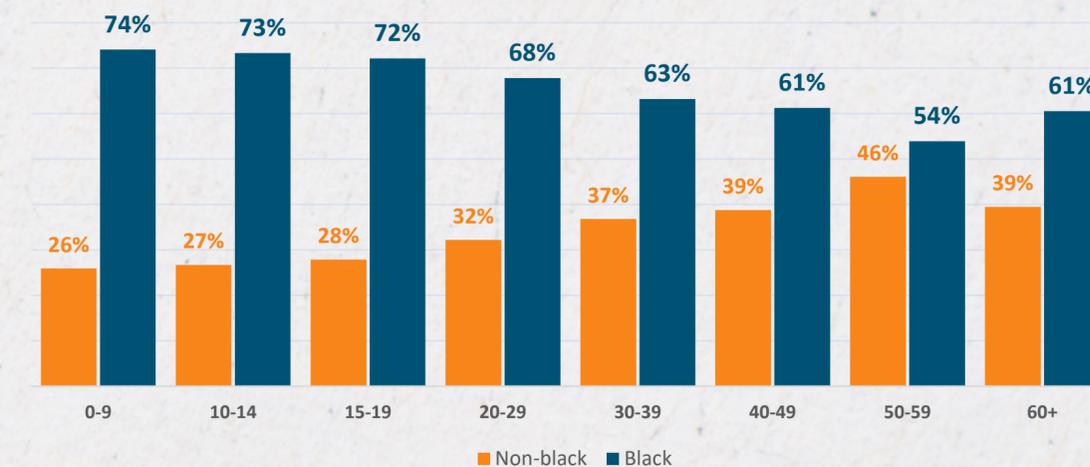
Source: Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)

⁹ Due to the differences in recording criteria for men and women, the figures for men only include cases in the age groups for which violence recording is mandatory.

Graph 30 - Recorded cases of firearm violence against male children, adolescents and older persons by race/color. Brazil, 2019



Graph 31 - Recorded cases of firearm violence against women by race/color. Brazil, 2019



Thirty-eight per cent of the recorded cases did not have information on level of education. This information gap was larger for cases involving black victims. The available data show that school-age victims were more likely to have an age-grade lag¹⁰ in both racial groups. However, this proportion was higher among black teenage victims, with the most pronounced difference in the 15-19 years group: only 18 per cent of black teenagers in this age group were attending or had completed high school at the time of the violent act, compared to 28 per cent

of non-black teenagers. The proportion of teenage girls who had an age-grade lag was lower than that for boys both in this age group and in the overall school-age population. More than 40 per cent of black and non-black teenage girls (15-19 years) were attending or had completed high school at the time of the violent act. Among young and adult women (20-39 years), around 20 per cent of non-black victims were attending or had completed higher education at the time of the incident, which is more than twice the rate of black victims.

¹⁰ An age-grade lag occurs when the student is older than the recommended age for the school year they are in (the recommended age for the first year of elementary school is six). 2020 Primary Education Census. Brasília-DF Inep/MEC, 2021.



2. PROFILE OF NON-LETHAL FIREARM VIOLENCE



Types of firearm violence

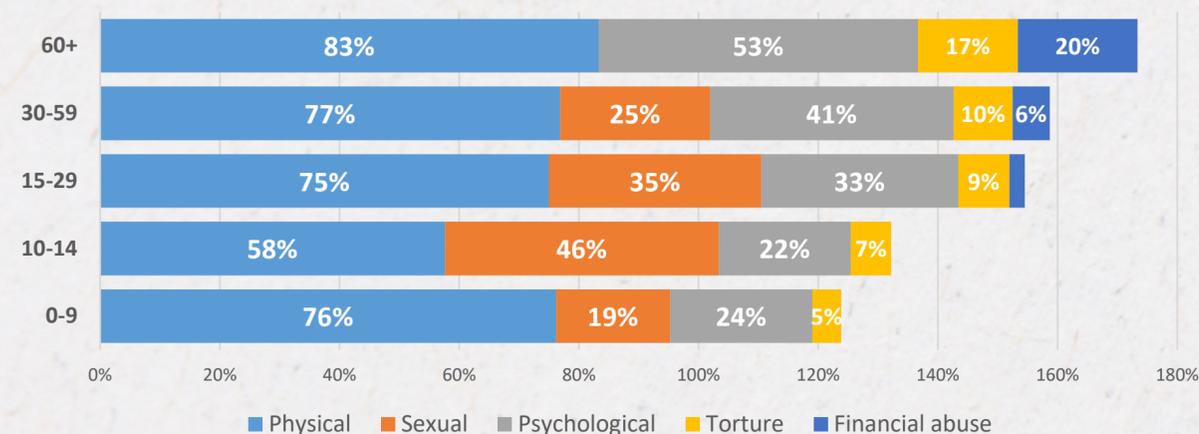
The most common type of firearm violence was physical violence, followed by psychological violence and sexual violence.¹¹

The most common type of violence among both men and women and black and non-black victims was physical violence, followed by psychological violence.

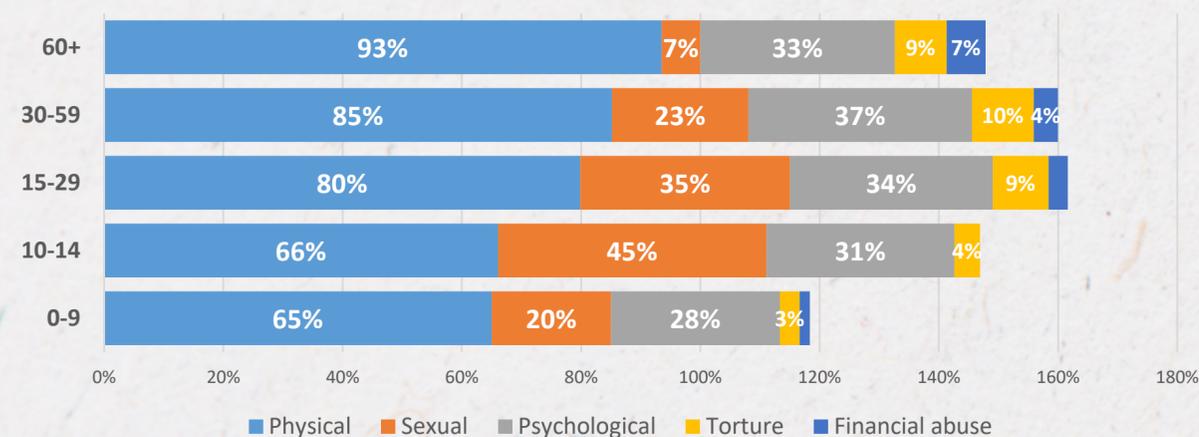
¹¹ The most common type of non-gun-related violence is physical violence, followed by psychological violence, sexual violence and neglect/abandonment.

profile of non-lethal firearm violence

Graph 32 - Recorded cases of firearm violence against non-black women by type of violence and age group. Brazil, 2019



Graph 33 - Recorded cases of firearm violence against black women by type of violence and age group. Brazil, 2019



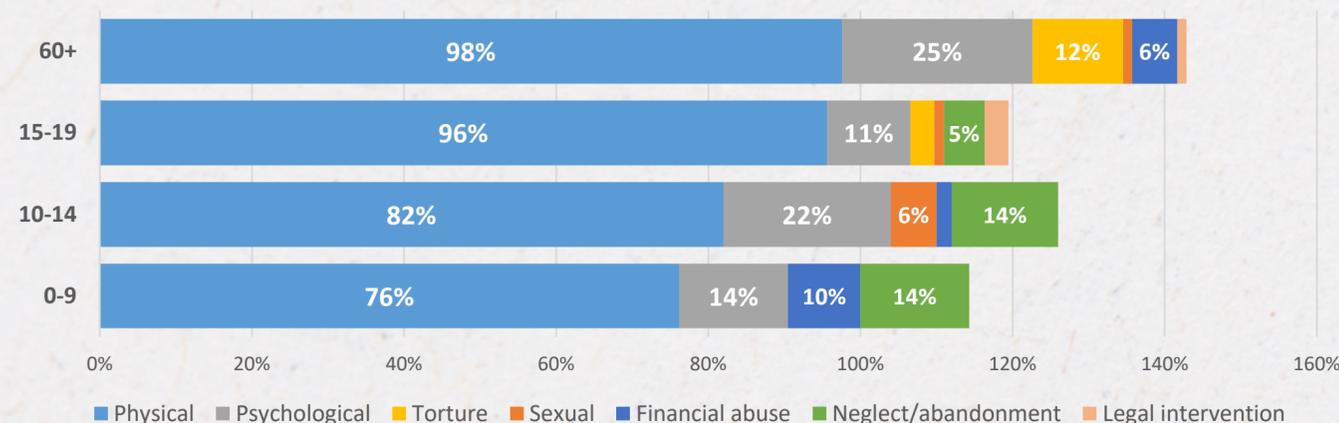
Psychological and sexual violence accounted for 35 and 30 per cent, respectively, of cases of firearm violence against women. The proportion of cases involving psychological violence was higher among adult women and non-black older women, while the share of cases involving sexual violence was higher in adolescents and young people in both racial groups. Cases of torture and financial abuse were also identified, with older non-black women being most likely to suffer this type of violence.

Source: Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)
 Note: Each case may involve more than one type of violence meaning that the total may exceed 100%



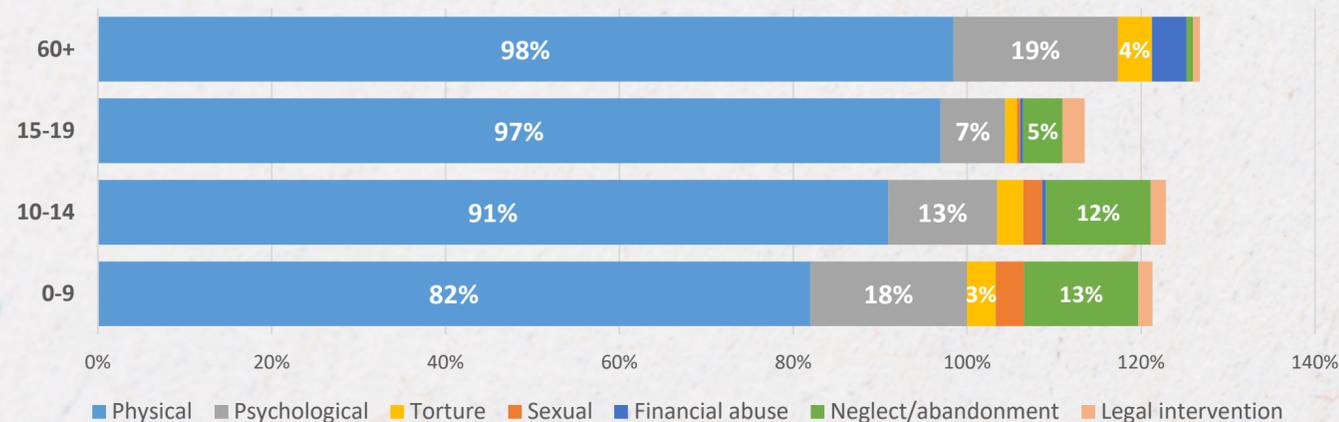
profile of non-lethal firearm violence

Graph 34 - Recorded cases of firearm violence against non-black male children, adolescents and older persons by type of violence. Brazil, 2019



Neglect accounted for around 13 per cent of cases of firearm violence against boys aged 0-14 years in both racial groups. Among older men, in addition to physical violence – which was reported in 98 per cent of recorded cases – and psychological violence, episodes of torture and financial abuse were also identified, with older non-black men being most likely to suffer this type of violence.

Graph 35 - Recorded cases of firearm violence against black male children, adolescents and older persons by type of violence. Brazil, 2019



Source: Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)
 Note: Each case may involve more than one type of violence meaning that the total may exceed 100%

Repeat violence and firearms

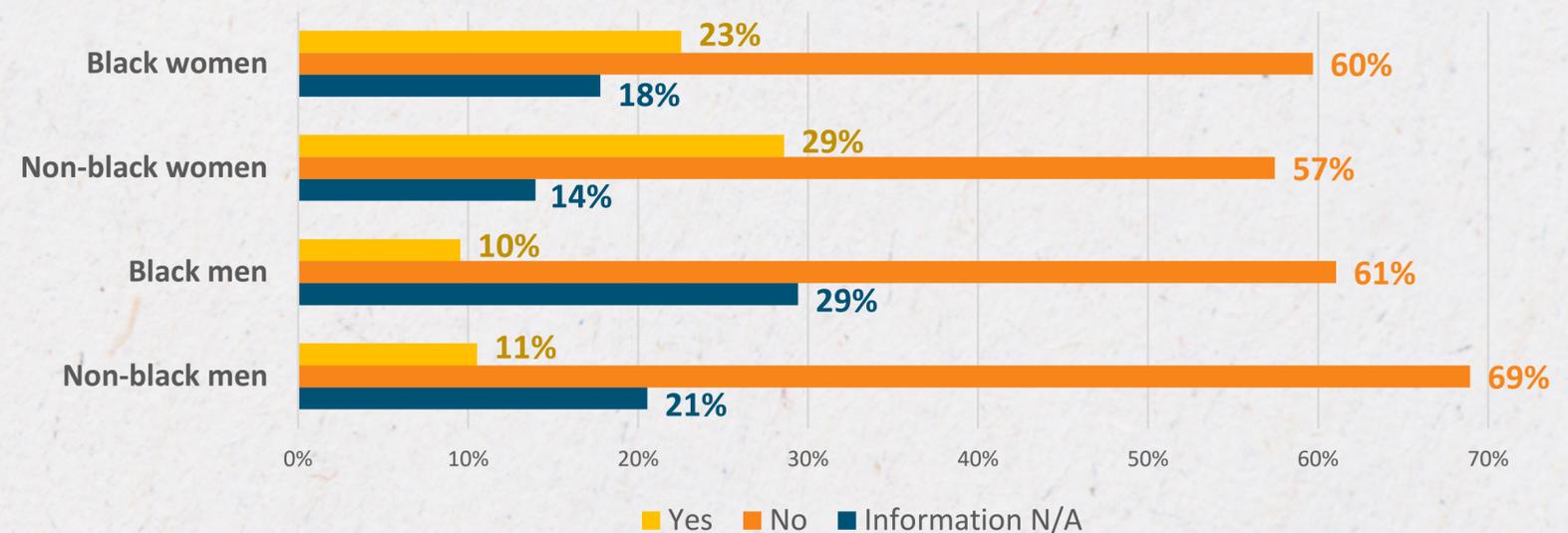
Repeat violence is recorded when the victim reports having suffered previous acts of violence, which are not necessarily the same type of violence.

Thirty-six per cent of the cases of violence (firearm violence and non-gun-related violence) involved repeat violence. This proportion was lower in cases of firearm violence, with 16 per cent of victims reporting that they had suffered previous acts of violence, albeit not necessarily gun violence. Women were disproportionately affected by repeat violence, with 25 per cent of female victims of firearm violence reporting that they had suffered previous episodes of violence, compared to just 10 per cent of men. The proportion of cases of repeat violence

was higher in women aged 20-29 years than in adolescents, rising thereafter with age. Non-black women were more likely to suffer repeat violence than black women. It is important to note however that the information gap was larger in the black population.



Graph 36 - Proportion of cases of repeat violence among recorded cases of firearm violence by race and gender. *Brazil, 2019*



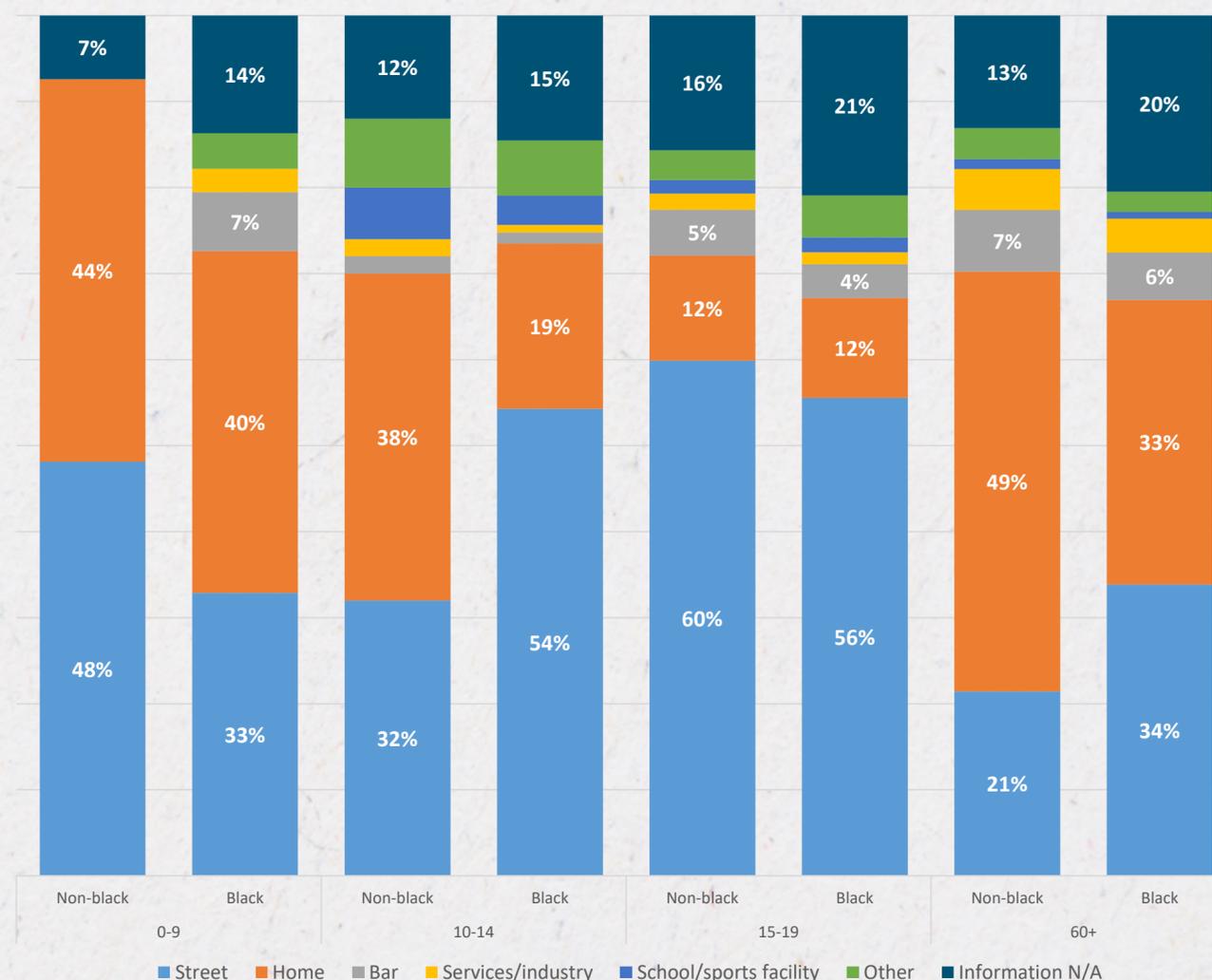
Source: Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)

Where does firearm violence occur?

The most common place of occurrence of firearm violence against men was on a public street. The proportion of cases of violence committed in this setting was highest among adolescents aged 15-19 years. The proportion of cases of firearm violence committed in the home was particularly high among children and older persons.

It is worth noting that non-black boys aged 10-14 years were more vulnerable at home (38 per cent), while the most common place of occurrence of violence against black boys in this age group was on a public street (54 per cent), following a similar pattern to that of older teenagers.

Graph 37 - Recorded cases of firearm violence against male children, adolescents and older persons by place of occurrence and race/color. Brazil, 2019



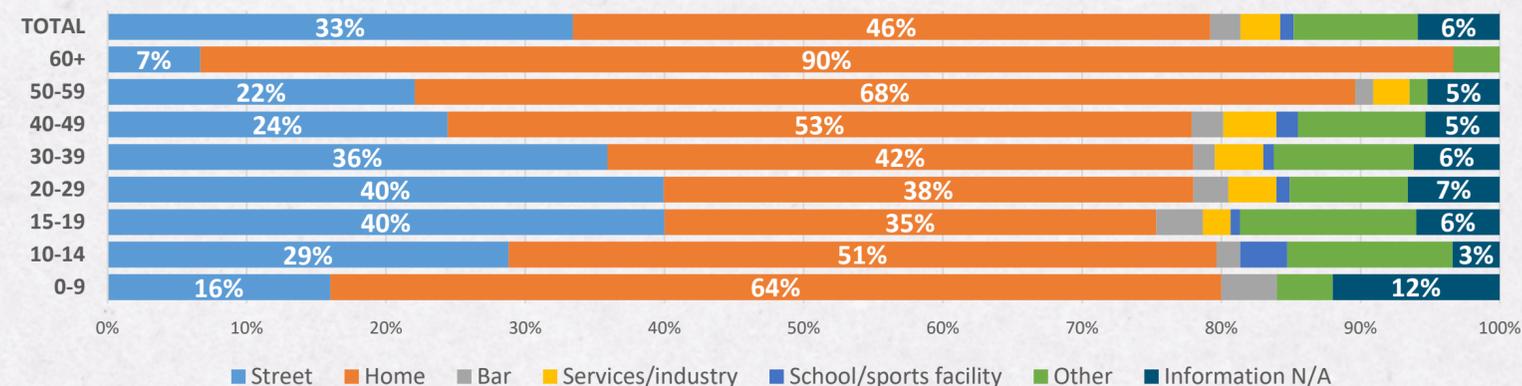
Source: Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)



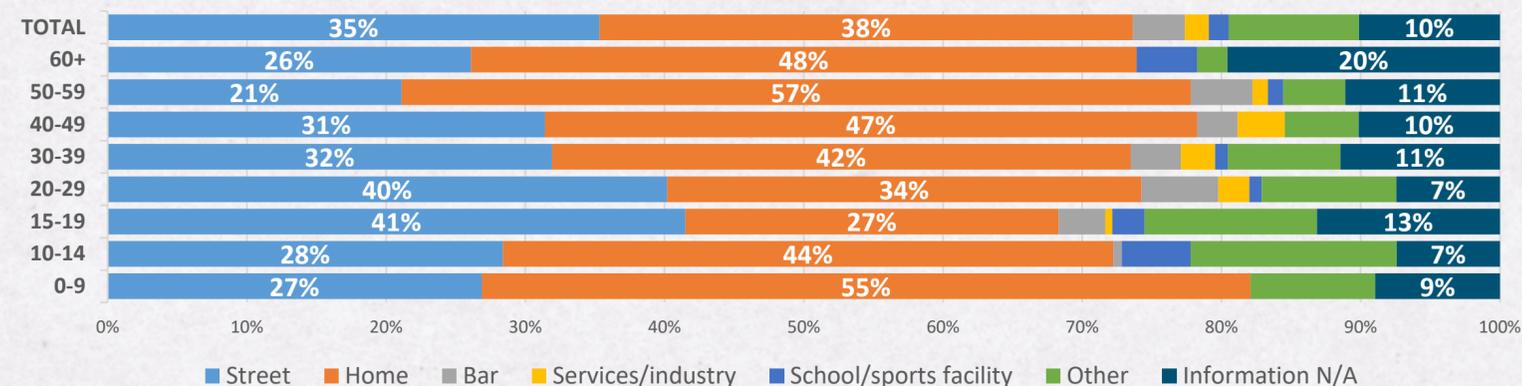
profile of non-lethal firearm violence

Among women, the most common place of occurrence was the home, with non-black women being more likely to suffer violence at home than black women (46 per cent versus 38 per cent). Women were more vulnerable at home across all age groups except young women (15-29 years), where on a public street was the most common place of occurrence in both black and non-black women (40 per cent in both racial groups). Non-black older women were more likely to suffer violence at home than black women, while black children were more likely to be assaulted on a public street than non-black children (although the most common place of occurrence in this age group was at home in both racial groups).

Graph 38 - Recorded cases of firearm violence against non-black women by place of occurrence and age group. *Brazil, 2019*



Graph 39 - Recorded cases of firearm violence against black women by place of occurrence and age group. *Brazil, 2019*



Source: Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)

Perpetrators of non-lethal firearm violence

Another important indicator for understanding the context in which violence takes place is the category of perpetrator. The most common type of perpetrator¹² in both sexes was a stranger. However, important differences appear when the data is broken down by gender and age group.

Among women, the second most common type of perpetrator of violence was intimate partner¹³ – accounting for one-quarter of cases – followed by an acquaintance. Less than 1 per cent of perpetrators of violence against men were intimate partners.

Figure 7 - Perpetrators of firearm violence against women. Brazil, 2019

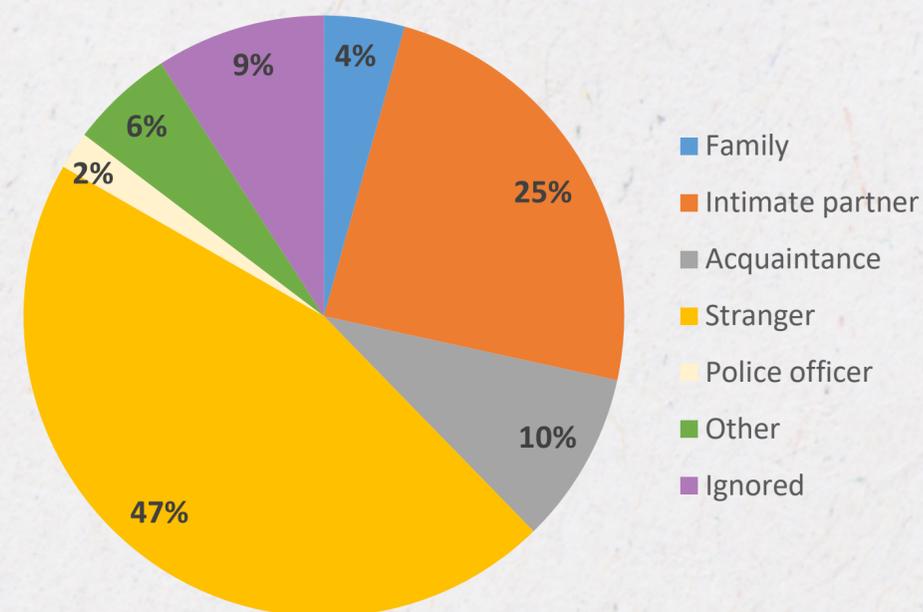
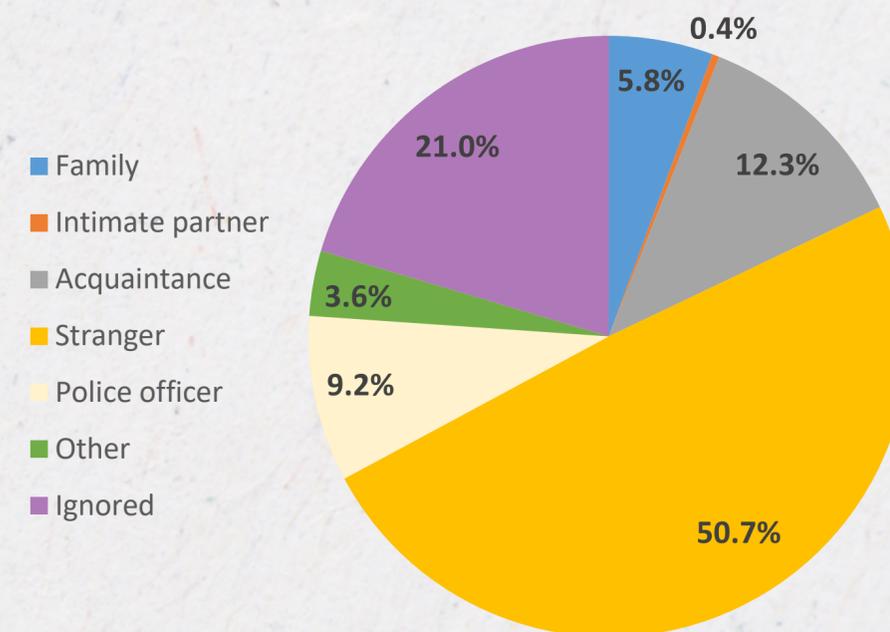


Figure 8 - Perpetrators of firearm violence against men. Brazil, 2019*



Source: Ministry of Health/Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)

Note: Data for men aged 20-59 years only includes cases of violence committed against the specific vulnerable groups mentioned above, including family/domestic and sexual violence. Each case may involve more than one type of perpetrator meaning that the total may exceed 100%.

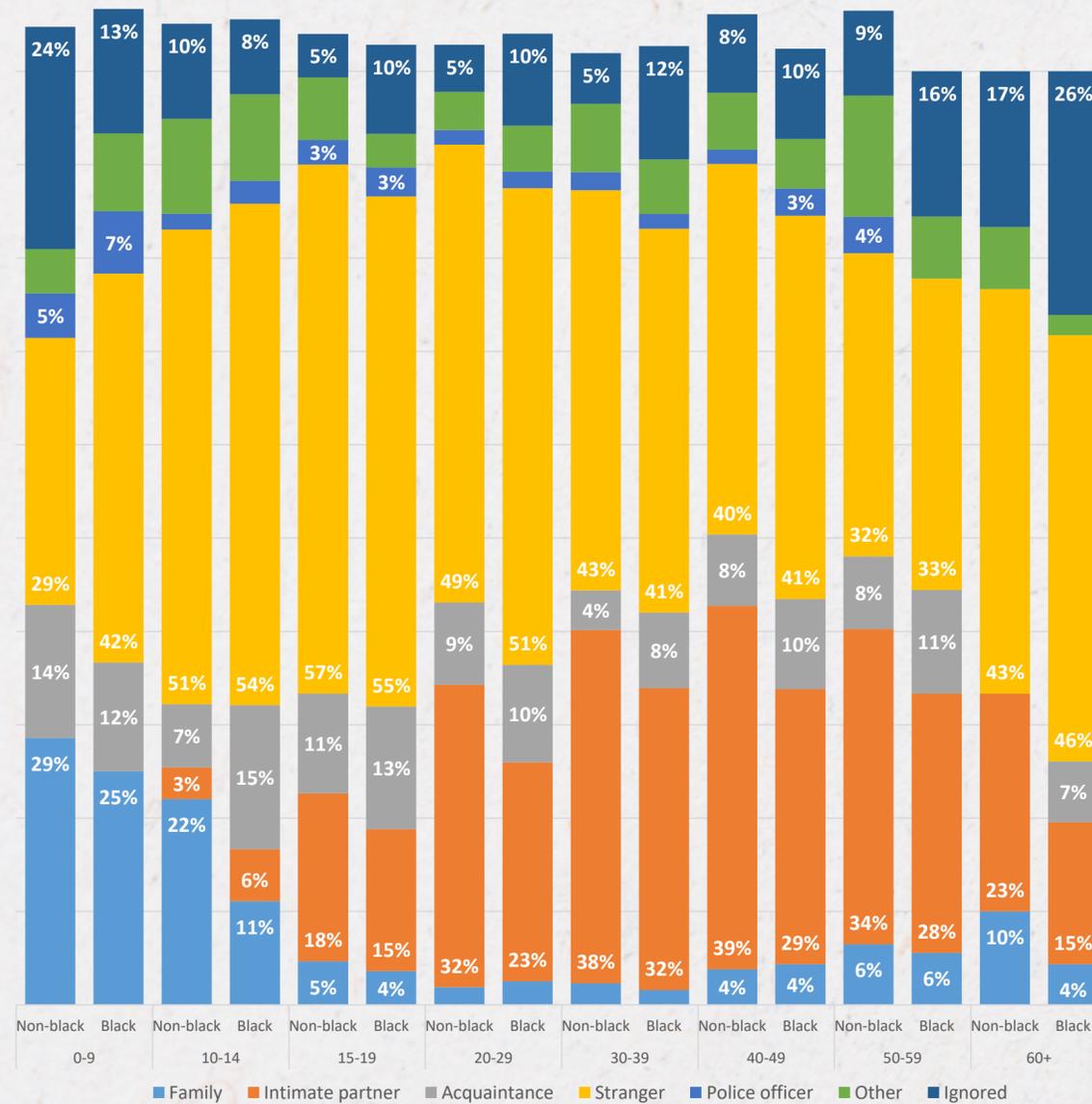
¹² The categories of perpetrator used by the SINAN are: father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, ex-boyfriend/girlfriend, son/daughter, stranger, sibling, acquaintance, carer, boss/employer, institutional relationship, police officer, other. For the purpose of this study perpetrators were grouped as follows: family, partner, acquaintance, stranger and other.

¹³ The categories of perpetrators of intimate partner violence against victims aged 10 years and over used by the SINAN are spouse/ex-spouse, boyfriend/ex-boyfriend. Ninety per cent of the victims of intimate partner violence were women.



profile of non-lethal firearm violence

Graph 40 - Perpetrators of firearm violence against women by race/color and age group. Brazil, 2019



Source: Ministry of Health/ Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)

Note: Each case may involve more than one type of perpetrator meaning that the total may exceed 100%.

Women were more likely to suffer intimate partner violence in adulthood, with non-black women showing the highest proportions in all age groups. Almost 40 per cent of perpetrators of violence against women aged 30-49 years were an intimate partner (Graph 40).

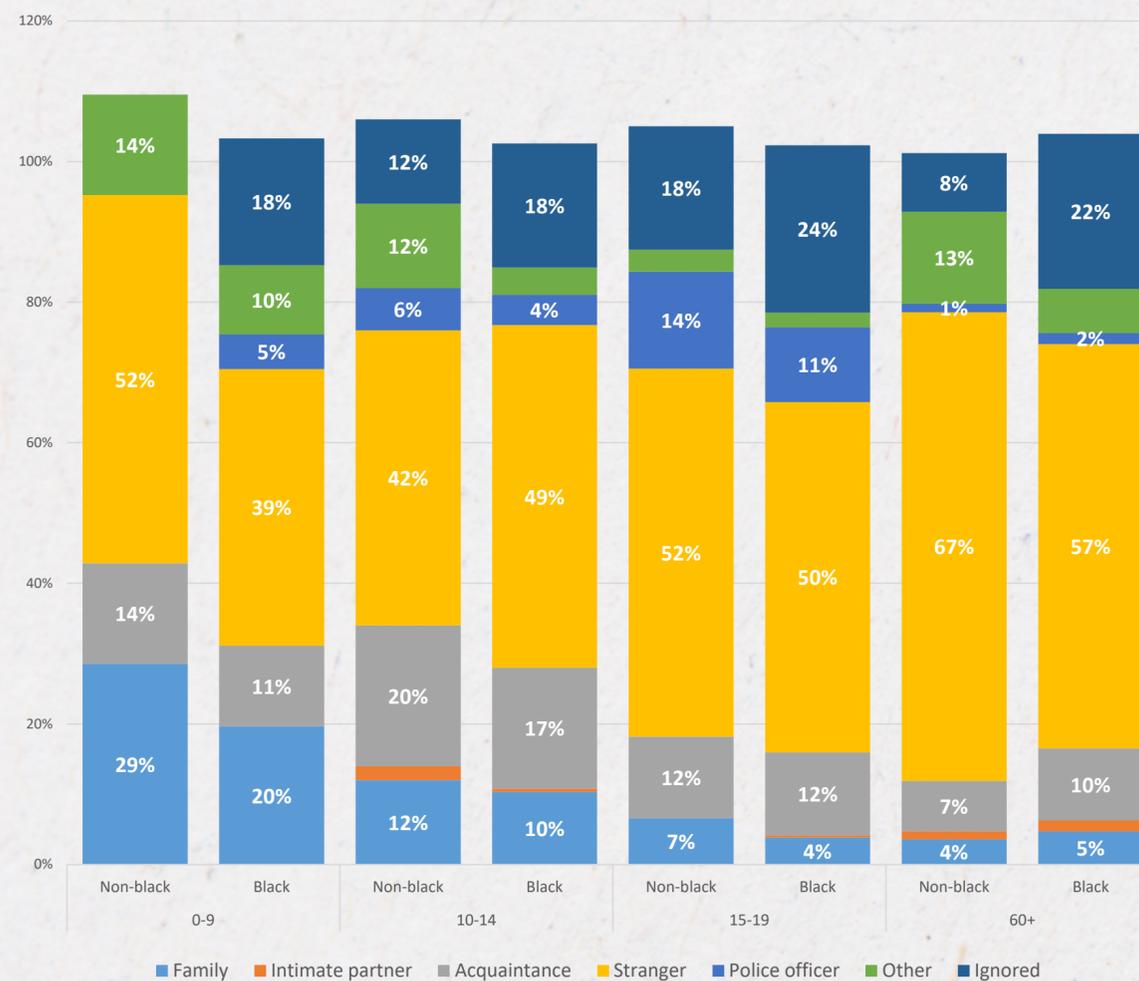
The most common type of perpetrator of violence against girls aged 10-19 years was a stranger in both racial groups, accounting for more than half of cases in this group, which is a substantially greater proportion than in the other age groups.

Around 40 per cent of the perpetrators of firearm violence against girls aged 0-9 years were a family member or acquaintance in both racial groups¹⁴. Although absolute numbers are small, firearm violence committed by a police officer also affected children (4 cases involving black girls and 1 case involving a non-black girl).

¹⁴ The number of cases of firearm violence against this group is relatively low, especially in non-black girls where the proportion of cases in which this information was ignored is higher (24%).

profile of non-lethal firearm violence

Graph 41 - Perpetrators of firearm violence against male children, adolescents and older persons by race/color and age group. Brazil, 2019



Source: Ministry of Health/ Health Surveillance Department - national notifiable diseases surveillance system (SINAN)

Note: Each case may involve more than one type of perpetrator meaning that the total may exceed 100%.

¹⁵ The absolute number of cases of violence against children is relatively small, especially among non-black boys, where the information on perpetrator is complete. It is worth noting however that firearm violence committed by a police officer also affected black boys (where 18% of cases do not have information on perpetrator).

There were no substantial differences between black and non-black men in the groups for which complete data is available (children, adolescents and older persons), except that the information gap was more pronounced among black men. Boys follow a similar pattern to girls, with a family member or acquaintance accounting for more than 30 per cent of cases in both racial groups¹⁵. The most common type of perpetrator of violence against adolescent boys and older men was a stranger.





IV FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Firearm violence accounted for the vast majority of intentional homicides in Brazil, reproducing and deepening racial disparities in homicide victimization. Black people were 3 times more likely to be affected by firearm violence than non-black people in 2019, both in the overall and younger population (15-29 years). This difference persisted throughout the time series at both national and regional level, being more pronounced in the Northeast, where the toll on black people was 3.8 times higher. The exception to this rule was the South, where firearm mortality rates among black and non-black people evened out in 2019 after a sharp fall in rates in the black population in 2018.

While black people represented more than 78 per cent of firearm homicides, it is also worth noting that shooting was the most common method of homicide among both black and non-black victims. Moreover, among children up to the age of 14, the firearm mortality rate was substantially higher in the black population (61 per cent versus 31 per cent in the non-black population).



final considerations and recommendations

The most common place of occurrence of firearm homicides was on a public street, followed by the home. While both black and non-black people were more likely to be killed outside the home, the proportion of black people killed outside the home was 3 times higher than in the non-black population. Although this difference is smaller when it comes to the home, black people are still 2 times more likely to be killed at home than non-black people. Other studies show that young black men are the main victims of community violence¹⁶, which is violence between individuals who are unrelated that is generally committed in public spaces by acquaintances or strangers and subject to repression by the criminal justice system¹⁷. The fact that the most common place of occurrence of firearm violence against black people was on a public street suggests that this group is more exposed to community violence. At the same time, black

people are more exposed to risk factors for homicide, such as gang membership, drug trafficking, availability of firearms, police interventions, social vulnerability and lack of public services¹⁸. In addition, government policies are incapable of reversing the pattern of inequality in access to rights suffered historically by the black population, while repressive policing and crime prevention policies and practices – such as the war on drugs and mass incarceration – tend to reinforce racial discrimination and reproduce dynamics that contribute to violence.

¹⁶ Reichenheim ME, Souza ER, Moraes CL, Jorge MHPM, Silva CMFP, Minayo MCS. Violência e lesões no Brasil: efeitos, avanços alcançados e desafios futuros. Lancet, Séries Saúde no Brasil, 2011. Available at: <http://download.thelancet.com/flatcontentassets/pdfs/brazil/brazilpor5.pdf>

¹⁷ Violence and Accident Surveillance: manual for reporting interpersonal and self-directed violence. 2nd edition. Brasília-DF, 2016.

¹⁸ ENGEL, L. et al. Diagnóstico dos Homicídios no Brasil: subsídios para o Pacto Nacional para Redução de Homicídios. Brasília: Ministério da Justiça / Secretaria Nacional de Segurança Pública, 2015.



The cases of non-lethal firearm violence show a similar pattern of victimization to firearm homicide, with violence disproportionately affecting the black population and growing rates of victimization in this group over the study period. Among women, racial disparities in victimization occur across all age groups, with differences being more pronounced in children, adolescents and young women. Racial disparities can also be witnessed in male children, adolescents and older persons. These disparities are particularly pronounced among adolescents, with black teenager accounting for more than 80 per cent of victims.

While the most common type of firearm violence was physical violence, a significant proportion of female victims suffered psychological violence and sexual violence (35 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively). These types of violence were present across all age groups and particularly pronounced among non-black women aged 30 years and over and both black and non-black adolescents and young women, respectively.

The most common place of occurrence of firearm violence against women was the home. The proportion of cases of violence in the home was greatest in non-black women. Women are more vulnerable at home across all age groups except young women (15-29 years), in which the most common place of occurrence is on a public street in both racial groups. The most common place of occurrence of firearm violence against adolescents is on a public street, followed by the home in both sexes. A study investigating recorded cases of firearm violence against adolescents (10-19 years) between 2011 and 2017 reported that the most common place of occurrence and category of perpetrator were on a public street and stranger, respectively, in both sexes. This pattern differs from that found by other studies investigating all types of violence against adolescents, which observed that the most common place of occurrence and category of perpetrator were the home and people with close ties to the victim¹⁹.

¹⁹ PINTO, I.V. et al. Violências com arma de fogo notificadas em adolescentes no Brasil. Rev Bras Epidemiol 2020; 23: E200002.SUPL.1





final considerations and recommendations

In the present study, the most common place of occurrence of firearm violence against older adolescents (15-19 years) is on a public street in both sexes. Among black boys (0-14 years), the most common place of occurrence is on a public street (54 per cent), while non-black boys are more likely to suffer firearm violence at home than on the street. Following the same pattern as overall homicides, the profile of firearm violence indicates that from an early age black boys are more likely to be involved in community violence that can lead to premature death.

The identification of the perpetrators of violence helps provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of firearm violence. While the most common perpetrator in overall cases of violence was a stranger, the detailed breakdown of the data provides valuable insights into the specificities of firearm violence by victim gender, age group and race/color.

Among children, perpetrators were family members and acquaintances in 30 per cent of cases against boys and 40 per cent of cases against girls. Among women, the proportion of cases of violence committed by a family member decreases with age, while the proportion of cases of intimate partner violence increases. Among boys, the most common category of perpetrator in younger adolescents was an acquaintance or family member, while in older adolescents it was a stranger. Perpetrators of violence against older adolescents also include police officers.

Ninety per cent of the victims of firearm violence committed by an intimate partner were women. Although women suffer this type of violence from an early age (15 years), the proportion of cases of intimate partner violence is higher among adult women. The proportion of cases of intimate partner violence was higher in non-black women than black women.





The data gathered by this study lay bare the real magnitude of firearm violence in Brazil and provide valuable insights into the dynamics of violence and the profile of both victims and perpetrators. The findings reveal deep racial disparities in victimization, with black people being disproportionately affected by both lethal and non-lethal firearm violence. With rare exceptions, these disparities are witnessed among both sexes and across all age groups at national and regional level. The mortality data reveal the scale of the problem in numbers of deaths of men and women, revealing the lethality of firearm violence, which takes a disproportionate toll on young black men who die mostly on the street. The recorded cases of non-lethal firearm violence provide important insights into the dynamics of violence, showing that guns are also used in intimate partner and family violence, which takes a disproportionate toll on children, adolescents, women and older people.

The pattern of victimization of firearm violence deepens racial disparities in overall homicides, as the differences between black and non-black people are even greater when it comes to gun violence. These disparities are coupled with racial inequalities in health, education, employment, housing, etc.²⁰ However, it is also important to draw attention to other factors that perpetuate these inequalities,²¹ such as barriers to education – in a context in which lower education is a factor that increases the risk of violent victimization – and access to security and justice, resulting selectivity in the repression of crime. Institutional racism results in discriminatory practices, posing an obstacle that aggravates vulnerabilities, increasing the exposure of black people to violence and maintaining the structural racism at the heart of Brazilian society.

Despite the complexity of the problem, the country has isolated examples of successful policies to tackle homicide at state and municipal level that need to be scaled up and adopted at a national level. These initiatives invest in results-based management, focusing on specific areas, circumstances and high-risk

²⁰ IBGE. Desigualdades sociais por cor ou raça no Brasil. Estudos e Pesquisas: Informação Demográfica e Socioeconômica, n. 41, 2019.

²¹ CERQUEIRA, D.; COELHO, D.S.C. Democracia racial e homicídios de jovens negros na cidade partida.



final considerations and recommendations

groups, integration between police forces and the justice system, coordination and cooperation between social services to promote an intersectoral approach, and local government engagement – as opposed to the traditional centralized model focused on police repression. Despite the influence of gun availability on violent crime, the government has made great strides in pushing through measures to ease access to arms and ammunition. The promotion of responsible gun control policies is therefore essential for curbing homicide levels. In this regard, it is worth noting that a recent study conducted by the Instituto Datafolha shows that white people are more likely to own guns than black people.²²

Considering that black people are disproportionately affected by firearm violence, it is essential to develop policies to promote racial equality. In 2009, the government created the National Plan for the Promotion of Racial Equality (Decree 6872/2009). Focusing on the fundamental rights of vulnerable ethnic groups, the plan is aimed at promoting inclusion and equal opportuni-

ties. In 2010, the Racial Equality Statute established a set of measures to address exclusion resulting from racial inequality. Fruit of widespread social mobilization, the government has made progress in this area, implementing initiatives designed to combat racial discrimination and redistributive measures.²³ However, in light of the racial disparities in homicide revealed by this study, it is necessary to step up efforts to implement intersectoral policies and cross-sector collaboration to address disparities and structural inequalities.

Finally, given the scale of the problem and grave consequences of firearm violence in the country, we endorse the recommendations made by health managers and researchers regarding the Ministry of Health Violence and Accident Surveillance System, proposing the mandatory reporting of all firearm injuries in the SINAN²⁴ regardless of age and sex. This is an essential step to improve the monitoring of this phenomenon and guide violence prevention policies.

²² A survey of the Brazilian population aged 16 years and over about the Ministry of Justice's anticrime package showed that 6% of white respondents (and 7% of yellow respondents) reported that they or someone in their home owned a gun, compared to only 4% of brown respondents and 3% of black respondents). Pacote Anticrime. Folha de São Paulo/Instituto Datafolha, April/2019.

²³ LIMA, M.; RAMOS, P. Educação e políticas públicas de promoção da igualdade racial no Brasil de 2003 a 2014. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung: Análise n. 31/2017.

²⁴ PINTO, I.V. et al. Violências com arma de fogo notificadas em adolescentes no Brasil. Rev Bras Epidemiol 2020; 23: E200002.SUPL.1

CREDITS

Firearm violence and racism: firearms and racial inequality

2022

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