

Poster session: Community Violence

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MEDICAL COMMUNITY ROLE IN GLOBAL ARMS TRADE
POLICY DISCUSSIONS

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Background The World Health Organization (WHO) made seeking practical, internationally agreed responses to the global drug and arms trade one of nine priority recommendations in its 2002 *World Report on Violence and Health*. “Even modest progress on either front would contribute to reducing the amount and degree of violence suffered by millions of people,” states WHO. A number of health organizations have taken a leadership role in bringing an evidence-based perspective to discussions on the global arms trade, including such initiatives as the Arms Trade Treaty, and the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Purpose To identify and describe key health contributions to the discussion and negotiation of international agreements to prevent armed violence.

Methods Review contributions of organizations including the International Committee of the Red Cross, the WHO Violence Prevention Alliance, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, and the American Public Health Association.

Results Medical and public health organizations are playing a vital role in strengthening arguments for global arms control treaties and agreements by: Quantifying the health and humanitarian costs of armed violence; contributing case studies on the context and societal consequences of firearm violence; describing how health professionals can help monitor agreements; outlining best practices for victim assistance, and; by using their medical platforms to educate decision makers about armed violence prevention as essential to community health and development.

Significance This paper provides rationale for health professionals to continue and increase their participation in policy debates on arms control issues.