

Homicides in the San Diego Region 2017

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In 2017, 80 homicides were reported in the San Diego region, the fourth lowest number in the past 38 years (Figure 1). Because no other crime can have a greater impact on a community, this CJ Flash focuses on information available to date regarding these 80 homicides.

Figure 1

Number of homicides reported in the San Diego region, 1980-2017



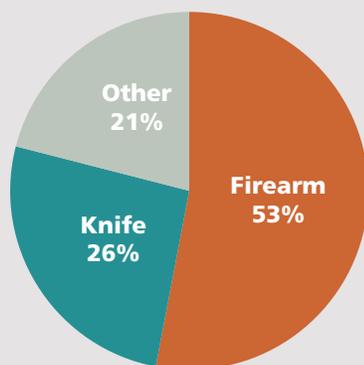
Only 73 of the 80 homicides originated in 2017 – 1 was a 1996 shooting with the victim succumbing to the injuries in 2017, 1 was a 2012 missing person which was verified as a homicide in 2017, and 5 were cases that involved initial injury in 2016 that resulted in death in 2017.

Highlight 1

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)¹, there were 17,793 homicides nationwide in 2015, the most recent year available, and **73%** were committed with a firearm. In 2017, **53%** of the homicides in San Diego County were committed with a firearm – below the national average.

Figure 2

Weapon type involved in San Diego County homicides, 2017

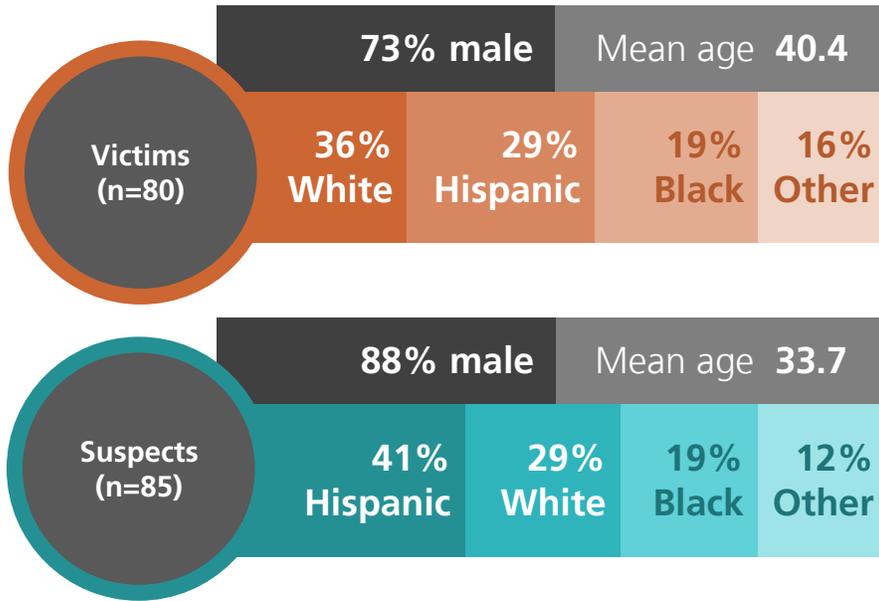


To date, there have been more homicides in the first four months of 2018 (31), compared to 2017 (25), according to preliminary statistics.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2017). *FastStats*. Available online at cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/homicide.htm

Highlight 2

Compared to victims (n=80), homicide suspects (n=85 across 68 cases) were younger and more likely to be male. Both groups were ethnically diverse, although Whites represented a greater proportion of victims and Hispanics a greater proportion of suspects.



When the race of the victim was compared to the race of the suspect (or the first suspect listed if multiple):

67% of White victims had a White suspect,

67% of Hispanic victims had a Hispanic suspect,

50% of Black victims had a Black suspect, and

36% of victims of other ethnicities had a suspect of another ethnicity

Highlight 3

Most homicide victims (**81%**) were killed by someone they knew – only **19%** were killed by a stranger. There were significant gender² differences, however, with males more likely to be killed by an acquaintance or stranger, and females by a family member or significant other.

Family/significant other

67% female **13%** male

Acquaintance of victim

24% female **63%** male

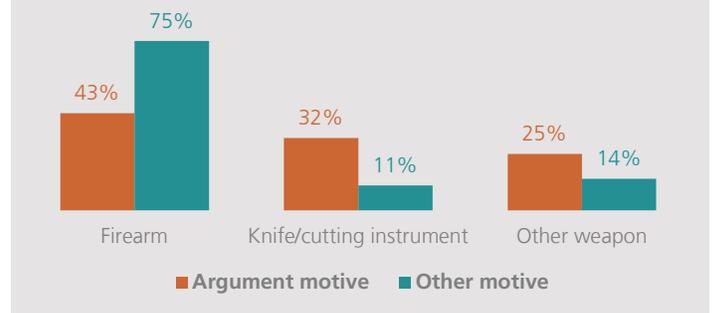
Stranger

10% female **24%** male

Highlight 4

For the **56** homicides where motive could be determined, an “argument” was the most likely reason, noted in half of the cases. Compared to homicides with another type of motive³, a firearm was less likely to be used when an argument was involved (Figure 3). In addition, the victim was more likely to be male (**86%** arguments, versus **61%** other motives).

Figure 3
Type of weapon used by motive, 2017



² There were 46 male victims and 21 female victims where victim-suspect relation could be determined.

³ Other motives included domestic violence (18%), gangs (13%), drugs (9%), robbery (7%), and other (4%).

Highlight 5

4 in every **5** homicides where a suspect had been identified involved only one suspect, as opposed to multiple suspects.

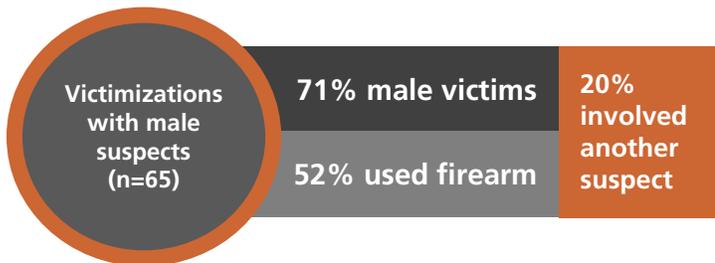
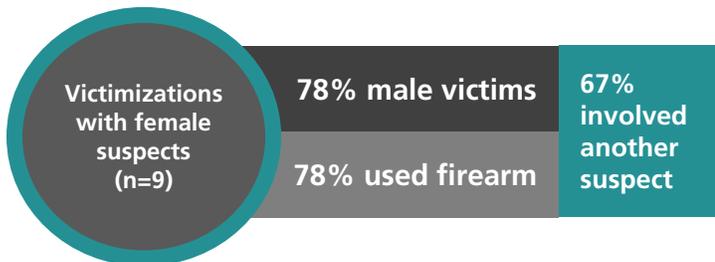
Of the 12 cases with multiple suspects where motive could be determined:

- 42%** (5) argument
- 25%** (3) robbery
- 17%** (2) gang issues
- 17%** (2) drugs

80% of homicides involved one suspect, as opposed to multiple suspects. Homicides where robbery was the motive were more likely to have multiple suspects. Only **2%** of single suspect cases were related to robbery, compared to **25%** of multiple suspect cases.

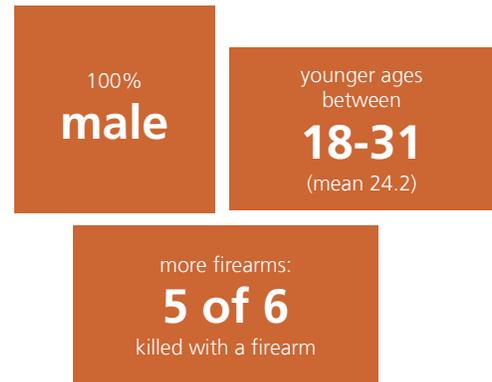
Highlight 6

Of the **85** identified suspects, **10** were females who committed **9** homicides. Interestingly, homicides with a female suspect most often had a male victim, used a firearm, and the suspect committed the crime with another individual, compared to those with a male suspect.



Highlight 7

Of the 80 homicides, **7** were identified as gang-related, and **6** of the 80 victims were identified as being gang members. How did these victims differ from other victims?



Of the deaths examined by the San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office categorized as homicide in 2017, preliminary data show that **80%** tested positive for one or more substances at the time of death.

Most common substances

- 42%** marijuana (THC)
- 31%** methamphetamines
- 28%** ethanol/alcohol
- 15%** non-opioid prescription drugs
- 10%** opioid prescription drugs