

Identifying the source of weapons used in injuries from small arms

Ogebe Onazi

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Nigeria

Background: The apparent burden of small arms violence on the Nigerian health care system motivated our determination to study the source of weapons used on victims seen at Hospitals in five states of Nigeria

Methods: A retrospective study in nine hospitals in five violence-prone states of Nigeria (Plateau, Kano, Kaduna, Rivers and Delta) was conducted from 2010-2012, using a cluster sampling method. Fifty victims of gun violence per state were selected. We obtained data from hospital intake registers. Weapon identification was made by examining wounds and type of bullets retrieved.

Results:

1. Plateau State, 20% (n=10) were injured from locally made arms, 80% (n=40) were injured from firearms imported from other countries.
2. Kano State, 88% (n=44) were injured from locally made arms, 12% (n=6) were injured from firearms imported from other countries.
3. Kaduna State, 66% (n=33) were injured from locally made arms, 34% (n=17) were injured from firearms imported from other countries.
4. Rivers State, 10% (n=5) were injured from locally made arms, 90% (n=45) were injured from firearms imported from other countries.
5. Delta State, 14% (n=7) were injured from locally made arms, 86% (n=43) were injured from firearms imported from other countries.

Conclusions: Majority of the guns were imported from other countries in three of the five states. This reinforces the need for effective mechanisms to regulate the international arms trade.

Significance: This is the first hospital-based study in Nigeria designed to identify the source of Weapons used in injuries from small arms.

Biography

Ogebe Onazi, a medical doctor from Jos, Nigeria, serves on the Board of Directors of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), a federation of 63 National affiliates that received the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize. Onazi holds a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery from the University of Jos, College of Medicine. He has spoken widely at international health events and meetings, and at global disarmament Meetings including the Second Preparatory Committee meeting for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, and has published on peace and health issues.

ogebe.o@gmail.com