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### **Research: Social Equality More Effective Than Gun Laws**

The International Coalition for Women in Shooting and Hunting (WiSH) welcomes new research published in the British Medical Journal which suggests that addressing social exclusion and disadvantage is more likely to reduce firearm crime than gun laws.

“This paper marks a new way of thinking about gun crime and crime overall. It shows that promoting gun laws in response to problems that are fundamentally social in nature is an outdated approach,” said WiSH Chair Dr Samara McPhedran.

Forensic psychotherapist Gwen Adshead and colleagues propose that improving the welfare of young people who are at risk of acting violently may be a more effective approach to gun crime than firearms legislation. The authors also recommend early intervention for ‘at risk’ youths.

“The study adds to a growing body of evidence that laws are no substitute for well thought out social policy. It is time for policymakers to implement comprehensive measures that will genuinely improve community wellbeing, rather than focussing on gun laws.”

“Sadly, young people at risk of drifting towards a life of violence have been overlooked for many years,” said Dr McPhedran.

A 2006 Home Office review on illegal firearms use in England and Wales found a high prevalence of socially isolated young men. Of the 80 men studied, around half indicated that they had been involved with gangs, and 58 had previous criminal offences. 59 had a disrupted or disadvantaged family background, and more than 50% had been excluded from school.

**Contact:**

**Dr Samara McPhedran –**

**0415 963 189/+61 415 963 189**

Chair, International Coalition for Women in Shooting and Hunting (WiSH)

[www.ic-wish.org](http://www.ic-wish.org)

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