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<https://journalistsresource.org/studies/government/criminal-justice/killed-police-black-men-likely-white-men/>

Black men 2.5 times more likely than white men to be killed by police, new research estimates
[There is corroboration from LA times and the Guardian

By [Clark Merrefield](#)

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A black man in the U.S. has an estimated 1 in 1,000 chance of being killed by police during his lifetime, according to a [paper out today](#) in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. That's 2.5 times the odds for a non-Hispanic white man, the authors find.

Black women are 1.4 times more likely than white women to be killed by police. Men overall are 20 times more likely than women to be killed by police, according to [the paper](#).

Young adults are generally more likely than older people to be killed violently – something called the [age-victimization curve](#) – and that holds true when it comes to police use of deadly force. Across race and gender, very few people over age 60 are killed by police, the paper finds. The odds for everyone spike from age 20 to 35. For black people, the odds stay higher longer.

“40-year-old black men are at about the same risk as 25-year-old white men,” says [Frank Edwards](#), an assistant professor at Rutgers University’s School of Criminal Justice and one of the paper’s authors. “So the risk for African Americans is following a really different pattern. The risk that black men and women face persist, and they’re comparable to the highest rates of risk for white people at a younger age.”

The sixth-leading cause of death for young men

American Indian men are also more likely than white, non-Hispanic men to be killed by police, at a rate 1.2 to 1.7 times greater, while the rate for Latino men is 1.3 to 1.4 times greater than the rate for white men, according to the paper. Asian and Pacific Islander men are half as likely as white men to be killed by police.

For all racial and ethnic groups, police use of force is the sixth-leading cause of death in the U.S. for men age 25 to 29, Edwards says. Accidental fatalities, suicide, other types of homicide, heart disease and cancer rank higher.

“There’s research that estimates the years of life lost from police and it’s something like 50,000 years of life lost annually,” Edwards says.

That figure is calculated from the estimated number of years a person would have lived if he or she had not died prematurely. A 30-year-old man who had a life expectancy of 80 years before he was killed by police has 50 years of life lost. Nationwide, the total years of life lost from encounters with law enforcement was 57,375 in 2015 and 54,754 in 2016, according to a [2018 paper](#) in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*.

By contrast, meningitis is associated with about 50,000 years of life lost each year, maternal deaths with about 57,000 and unintentional firearm injuries about 41,000, according to the 2018 paper.

Journalists produce good data on people killed by police – the U.S. government doesn’t (yet)

Research has thrown doubt on the reliability of federal data on deaths caused by police. The [National Vital Statistics System](#) (NVSS) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is one large federal database that counts people killed by police. But [research published in recent years found](#) the NVSS has undercounted these numbers by more than half. The FBI keeps tabs on what it calls [justifiable homicide](#) – “[the killing of a felon by a peace officer in the line of duty](#)” – but [academic analyses also have found](#) the FBI’s numbers to be off by about half.

Edwards, along with co-authors [Hedwig Lee](#) and [Michael Esposito](#), used data covering 2013 to 2018 from [Fatal Encounters](#) to calculate their estimates. Fatal Encounters is a data project run by journalist [D. Brian Burghart](#). Researchers for Fatal Encounters track incidents in which police used deadly force and verify facts through news media reports and [public records requests](#). *The Washington Post* also [maintains a database](#) of people who have been shot and killed by police, and the *Guardian* newspaper in the United Kingdom has [in the past tracked](#) police use of deadly force in America. Neither were used in the paper out today.

In 2017, [the FBI tallied](#) 429 justifiable homicides nationwide. For the same year, the NVSS [counted 589 deaths](#) from “legal intervention” – its term for deaths caused by police. Fatal Encounters [put the total](#) number of people killed during interactions with law enforcement at 1,750 in 2017.

“On the one hand, it’s wonderful that we have people taking it upon themselves to do this in a way that’s been fact checked and reliable and is something we can use to produce epidemiological research,” Edwards says. “On the other hand, it’s a travesty that it’s come to that, and it’s also tragic that this is happening in an era when [local news](#) is being gutted.”

Offenders [intentionally killed](#) 46 law enforcement officers in 2017, [according to FBI data](#).

The Bureau of Justice Statistics kept data on arrest-related deaths from 2003 to 2012 under its [Mortality in Correctional Institutions](#) (MCI) program. The federal agency stopped collecting data on arrest-related deaths in 2014, “due to concerns over the program’s coverage and reliability,” [according to BJS criminologists](#).

The MCI program operates under the authority of the Death in Custody Reporting Act, [last authorized in 2014](#), which requires that state and federal law enforcement agencies report to the U.S. Attorney General deaths that happen during interactions with or while in custody of police. But quarterly reporting won’t begin until 2020, according to a [Federal Register notice from the Department of Justice](#).

Just last week, BJS [released a technical report](#) on a pilot study of its redesigned survey methodology for counting arrest-related deaths, which includes reviewing media reports of people killed by police.

“The hybrid approach to identifying arrest-related deaths, which combined information from media reviews and agency surveys, resulted in improvements in data completeness and quality,” the report concludes.

Spillover effects from police-related deaths

Spillover effects broadly refer to seemingly unrelated consequences that follow an action or event. There is at least one comprehensive, recent piece of academic research on the spillover effects that can happen when people are killed by police.

A 2018 [study in *The Lancet*](#) used more than 100,000 records from the CDC’s nationally representative [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#) survey to explore whether incidents where people are killed by police are associated with mental stress.

The authors found that police killings of unarmed black Americans could contribute to almost two additional days of poor mental health per person among black American adults. That’s a total of 55 million extra poor mental health days each year. For comparison, the authors estimate that diabetes could be responsible for 75 million poor mental health days for black Americans. They didn’t observe mental health impacts after police killed unarmed white Americans or armed black Americans.

Even when law enforcement officers use non-deadly tactics, there can be spillover effects in the communities they serve. Research has associated [stop-and-frisk policing](#) with [poor mental health](#) and [increased risk of diabetes and obesity](#).

“Know the magnitude of the problem”

Dozens of cases of police killing black men have received national media attention. Some cases can take years to adjudicate. Last week, a judge recommended that Daniel Pantaleo, the New York Police Department officer who choked Eric Garner to death on a Staten Island sidewalk five years ago, should be fired.

The research out today provides contextual data that can gird future stories about incidents in which people are killed by police.

“You need good numbers to know the magnitude of the problem,” says Edwards. “We think we’ve illustrated it should be taken seriously as a cause of early death, particularly among young people — to the extent that federal, state and local governments are interested in reducing deaths among young people.”

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https://www.huffpost.com/entry/black-people-killed-by-police-america_n_577da633e4b0c590f7e7fb17

U.S. police killed at least 258 black people in 2016, according to a project by The Guardian that tracks police killings in America.

Thirty-nine of these people were unarmed. Four were killed by police stun guns and another nine died in custody, a continuing problem in American jails. But the majority of black people killed by police were fatally shot.

Based on a tracker from The Washington Post, at least 232 black folks were shot and killed. (The Guardian’s figures include all deaths resulting directly from encounters with law enforcement, while the Post counts only people who were shot and killed by police.)

The Post found that 34 percent of the unarmed people killed in 2016 were black males, which is quite disproportionate since black men make up only 6 percent of the U.S. population. There was also a considerable uptick in deaths caught on camera via cellphone and police cameras.

Take the case of Keith Lamont Scott, who was shot and killed by an officer in Charlotte, North Carolina, in September. Scott was the 173rd black person to be fatally shot by police in 2016, based on The Washington Post tally.

Police were searching for another man when they came across Scott, who they claim was armed. Charlotte police Chief Kerr Putney said in a news conference on Tuesday that officers told Scott to drop his weapon, but that Scott got back into his car and came out again still holding the gun.

A woman who identified herself as Scott’s daughter recorded the shooting’s aftermath on Facebook Live. Scott, according to her and other witnesses, did not have a gun and was disabled. Scott’s killing has touched off violent protests in Charlotte.

A day before Scott was killed, police in Tulsa, Oklahoma, released several videos depicting the death of Terence Crutcher. The 40-year-old was shot and killed by police on Friday after officers saw his stalled SUV in the middle of the road. Initially, the police department said Crutcher had not followed orders to put his hands up.

The released videos, however, show Crutcher walking toward his car with his hands in the air.

We've seen back-to-back deaths like this before. In July, Philando Castile was shot and killed in Falcon Heights, Minnesota. His fiancée, Diamond Reynolds, filmed a graphic video that showed Castile bleeding to death from gunshot wounds. The officer "shot him three times because we had a busted taillight," Reynolds says in the clip.

The day before Castile was killed, Alton Sterling, a 37-year-old father of five, became the 135th black person killed by police in 2016.

Police in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, fatally shot Sterling following an encounter with Officers Blane Salamoni and Howie Lake. The two officers were responding to reports of a man carrying a gun, threatening others and selling CDs in front of a Triple S convenience store.

Two videos of the incident, apparently filmed by witnesses, were released to the media. One showed a detained Sterling lying on the ground as officers hovered over him before shooting him at close range. A second video offered a clearer perspective, showing that Sterling wasn't reaching for his pockets and didn't have anything in his hands.

Since the 2014 death of 18-year-old Michael Brown at the hands of police in Ferguson, Missouri, the media has reported extensively that police arrest and kill black men at far higher rates than other groups. Six out of 10 black men say they have been treated unfairly by police because of their race, according to a 2015 study.

Based on The Guardian's data, black males between the ages of 15 and 34 are nine times more likely to be killed by police than any other demographic. This group also accounted for 15 percent of all 2015 deaths from law enforcement encounters, even though black males in this age range make up just 2 percent of the U.S. population.

In 2015, The Guardian estimates, at least 306 black people were killed by U.S. police. The Washington Post puts the number of black people who were shot dead in 2015 at 258.

Activists have called for diversifying America's predominantly white police force. But interactions between black officers and black civilians can be stained by violence as well. A 2007 study found that black residents of Washington, D.C., felt as though black cops treated them more harshly than white officers did. A 2006 study of Cincinnati police records discovered black officers were more likely than white officers to arrest black suspects.

“Race is a trigger for police brutality,” Jack Glaser, an associate professor at the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, told The Huffington Post in 2015. The reasons for this may lie in the history of policing in America and the fact that modern-day policing, at least in the South, can trace its lineage to slave patrols.

But statistics and history aside, Keith Scott, Terence Crutcher, Alton Sterling and Philando Castile didn’t deserve to die.

“Sterling was a black man who lived in an America that consistently devalues, disrespects and destroys black lives,” HuffPost Black Voices editor Lilly Workneh wrote in July. “Now is not the time to stay silent about these injustices. Black men and women have raised their voices to declare that black lives matter and to say the names of those who have died unjustly.”

“Alton Sterling, father of five,” Workneh added. “May he rest in peace.”

Same goes for all the others. May they rest peacefully.

This post has been updated to incorporate data on police killings through the end of 2016.

CORRECTION: *An earlier version of this article said The Washington Post estimates that police killed 285 black people in 2015. That number is actually 258. The article also previously misstated Scott’s middle name as “Lamar.”*