

Police violence takes 'substantial' toll on youth and people of color

May 7 2018

Police violence in the US is taking a 'substantial' toll on youth and people of colour, indicates research published online in the *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*.

Estimates from the available data show that more than 100,000 years of life were lost in 2015 and 2016, with half that total among [people](#) of colour.

There are no comprehensive official data on deaths and injuries caused by encounters with the [police](#) in the US, although several studies have attempted to come up with some figures, using available information.

But none of those studies has attempted to calculate years of life lost (YLLs), a measure used in public health to look at the impact of disease and injuries across different groups of people.

The researchers therefore drew on The Counted database, a publicly available data series compiled by The Guardian, to characterise deaths and YLLs due to [police violence](#) in the US in 2015 and 2016.

The Counted combines police reports, news stories, and other independent reporting systems with crowdsourced information in a bid to monitor all deaths in the US attributable to police [violence](#).

The researchers calculated YLLs for each person in the database by subtracting the age at [death](#) from the corresponding standard life

expectancy.

In 2015 and 2016, 1146 and 1092 people, respectively, lost their lives to police violence. Over half of these were among Whites (just under 52%), while around one in four (25.5%) were among Blacks and just under 17 percent among Hispanics.

The researchers estimated that there were 57,375 and 54,754 YLLs due to police violence in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

The estimates showed that police violence disproportionately affects the young—25-34 year olds—and people of colour, who make up 38.5 percent of the population, but comprise more than half (51.5%) of YLLs in 2015-16.

"The number of YLLs due to police violence is substantial," say the researchers, who point out that these deaths rival other significant causes of death in the US, including meningitis and giving birth. And they exceed those caused by unintentional firearm injuries and cycling accidents.

"Yet many of these conditions receive more attention than police violence, in terms of grant funding, for example," they say, adding that the figures don't capture the wider impact, such as non-fatal injuries, [long term disability](#), and family trauma.

Without better data, it will be very difficult to set policy and stem the tide, they conclude.

More information: Years of life lost due to encounters with law enforcement in the USA, 2015-2016, *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, [DOI: 10.1136/jech-2017-210059](https://doi.org/10.1136/jech-2017-210059)

Provided by British Medical Journal

Citation: Police violence takes 'substantial' toll on youth and people of color (2018, May 7)
retrieved 4 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-05-police-violence-substantial-toll-youth.html>

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