

# Neighborhood environment and health

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Therese S. Richmond, PhD, CRNP, FAAN, the Andrea B. Laporte Professor of Nursing, Associate Dean for Research & Innovation, and senior investigator for the study. Credit: Penn Nursing

It is well understood that urban black males are at a disproportionately high risk of poor health outcomes. But little is known about how the neighborhood environments where these men live contribute to their health.

In a first-of-its-kind study, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing) examined the relationship between area-level characteristics and individual-level neighborhood perceptions in urban Philadelphia and assessed their associations with indicators of the physical and [mental health](#) of recently injured, black men. "Racial, socioeconomic and neighborhood disparities persist, and it is helpful to distinguish between the effects of what objectively exists in a neighborhood (such as [crime rate](#)) from what people perceive about their environment (such as feeling safe)," said lead-author Aimee Palumbo Ph.D., MPH, who conducted this investigation during a post-doctoral fellowship at the Penn Injury Science Center.

They used self-reported physical and mental health for the thirty days before these men were injured. They made two discoveries: increased odds of poor mental health were associated with neighborhood economics and education and individual perceptions of social disorder and safety; and increased odds of poor physical health was associated with neighborhood deprivation and disconnectedness.

"The analysis of the contribution of area-level characteristics and individual-level perceptions of neighborhood environment to the mental

and [physical health](#) of recently injured, urban black males is an important step toward understanding factors that contribute to [health in vulnerable populations](#)," said Therese S. Richmond, Ph.D., CRNP, FAAN, the Andrea B. Laporte Professor of Nursing, Associate Dean for Research & Innovation, and senior investigator for the study.

**More information:** Aimee J. Palumbo et al, Neighborhood Environment and Health of Injured Urban Black Men, *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities* (2019). [DOI: 10.1007/s40615-019-00609-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-019-00609-5)

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