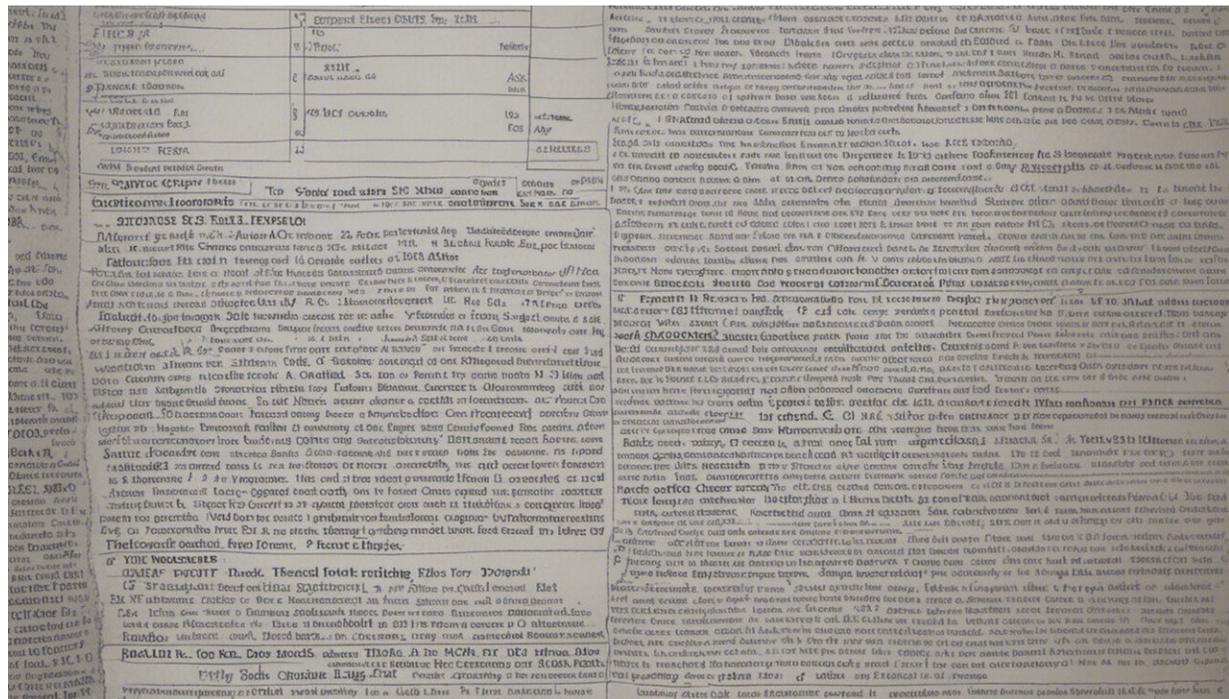


# Stop and frisk linked with trauma and stress, sociology study finds

October 21 2014, by Emily Wood



Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

Young men stopped and questioned in New York City by police are reporting higher levels of trauma and stress associated with those experiences, particularly when they report that the encounters were intrusive, according to a study led by Amanda Geller, an NYU sociologist.

The research, which appears in the *American Journal of Public Health*, constitutes one of the first studies of the mental health impacts of "stop and frisk" and similar police tactics on [young men](#)—the population most affected by these policing policies.

"Our findings suggest that pro-active policing tactics have the potential to negatively affect the relationship between the community and police, as well as the mental health and well-being of community members," says Geller, the director of NYU's Master's Program in Applied Quantitative Research and a clinical associate professor of sociology.

According to the study, men who experienced the most intrusive encounters—those interactions that were aggressive, deemed unfair, or which involved racially charged language—also experienced the most significant symptoms. However, men who had experienced only minimal interactions with the police also reported feelings of stress, [trauma](#), and anxiety. Also notable was the disparity across race, with black respondents experiencing [trauma symptoms](#) more frequently than other races.

"Most of the police encounters our respondents described didn't include an arrest or incarceration, yet they still reported associated [mental health](#) symptoms," Geller explains. "This tells us that even the low levels of interaction that many urban residents experience may have consequences."

In the study, participants responded to surveys about the nature of their interaction with police and were asked to report any symptoms of anxiety and trauma they experienced due to the encounter.

The correlation between anxiety and trauma reported by subjects in the study and the [police](#) interaction they experienced are consistent with research that suggests that any social benefit achieved through proactive

policing, such as improved public safety and feelings of security, may be offset by costs to individual and community health.

The study compared self-reported trauma and anxiety levels among male New York City participants, aged 18- to 26 years. Participants included 1,261 young men representing 37 neighborhoods across the city from September 2012 to March 2013. Of the 1,261 respondents, 85 percent had been stopped at least once in their lifetime, and 46 percent had been stopped in the past year.

**More information:** "Aggressive Policing and the Mental Health of Young Urban Men." *American Journal of Public Health*. e-View Ahead of Print. [DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2014.302046](https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302046)

Provided by New York University

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