

Study says police violence a leading cause of death among young American men



New York, August 17 (RHC)-- Police violence in the United States is a leading cause of death of young men, especially affecting minorities, with Black men 2.5 times more likely to be killed by law enforcement over their lifetime than white men, according to a study.

Among men of all races, ages 25 to 29, police killings are the sixth-leading cause of death, according to research by Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey, and published this month in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The risk of a Black man being killed by a police officer is about 2.5 times higher than that of a white man, the study found. Black women were 1.4 times more likely to be killed by police than white women.

"The inequality is not surprising," said lead author Frank Edwards, assistant professor in the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University. Edwards cited the police killings of Black men like Michael Brown and Eric Garner, and like the young Tamir Rice, and the protests that followed that brought national attention to the racially-motivated

character of police violence against civilians.

"All you have to do is turn on the news to see that people of color are at a much greater risk of police-related harm," he added. "What we lack in this country are the solid estimates of police related deaths because there is no official database where this information is stored."

The Rutgers study used data compiled by the National Vital Statistic System's mortality files and Fatal Encounters (FE), a journalist-led database that documents deaths involving police. The new research also found that Native American men were 1.5 times more likely to be killed by police than white men and Native American women were about 1.5 times more likely to be killed by police than white women.

Hispanic men were 1.4 times more likely to be killed than their white counterparts, while Hispanic women were about 1.2 times less likely to be killed than white women. There are roughly 1,000 police killings annually in the U.S., according to independent tallies, including those by The Washington Post and The Guardian newspapers. Of those, about half are determined to be unjustified

Police killings are far more common in the United States than in other advanced countries, partly because the U.S. has a much higher rate of gun ownership and homicide than economically similar countries, according to a 2016 study. America's high rates of gun ownership and violence make many police fearful for their lives, research shows.

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