

Getting Real About ‘The Talk’

JEFFREY EUGENE, MD; SARAH CAPPONI, MD; NICOLE JAFFE, MD; GEORGE DALEMBERT, MD, MSHP
Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)

ABSTRACT

Background:

The killing of young Black men by police officers is a public health crisis. Black men are disproportionately killed by police compared to white men, with estimates suggesting that Black men are up to 21 times more likely to be fatally shot by police than white men¹. Physicians can play an important role in preparing young Black men to safely navigate police encounters in their anticipatory guidance to youth and families.²

Objectives:

We seek to: 1) elicit key messages from youth and their caregivers about safely navigating police encounters and the acceptability of physicians discussing this topic in the primary care setting; 2) elicit, from physicians, the acceptability and key barriers and facilitators for incorporating discussion of safely navigating police encounters into clinical practice.

Methods:

Qualitative study employing focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Participants include: Black males (ages 13-18) and their caregivers; pediatric attending physicians; and pediatric resident physicians. Using a modified grounded theory approach, we will perform inductive analysis to generate primary themes.

Study Outcomes & Implications:

We will use the data collected to design an intervention that incorporates the insights from study participants into an acceptable medium of anticipatory guidance for safely navigating police encounters, empowering providers to engage in antiracist practice and allowing families to receive the support they identify they need from their pediatricians.

FUNDING SUPPORT

ACGME Back to Bedside Initiative

Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, University of Pennsylvania

BACKGROUND

The killing of young Black men by police is a public health crisis:

- In 2018, 1,166 deaths of Black men between the ages of 15-34⁴ up from 1,134 deaths in 2015
 - Death rate 5x times higher than white men aged 15-34³
- Years of life lost by police violence are proportionately greater for young men of color⁵
- Black men are 21 times more likely to be fatally shot by a police officer than White men¹

Generations of systemic racism have led to increased likelihood that Black communities are over-policed and experience greater likelihood of adverse encounters with police⁷

Caregivers prepare young Black men to safely navigate police encounters through what is colloquially known as ‘The Talk’.

Physicians can play an important role in having ‘The Talk’ with Black youth², yet training may be a barrier for medical providers⁸

OBJECTIVES

- Elicit key messages from youth and their caregivers about safely navigating police encounters and the acceptability of physicians discussing this topic in the primary care setting
- Elicit, from physicians, the acceptability and key barriers and facilitators for incorporating discussion of safely navigating police encounters into clinical practice.
- Incorporate insights from study participants into an acceptable medium of anticipatory guidance for safely navigating police encounters, empowering providers to engage in antiracist practice, and allowing families to receive the support they identify they need from their pediatricians.

METHODS

Participants

(1) Black men ages 13-18 and their caregivers recruited from pediatric primary care practices in Philadelphia

(2) Resident and Attending Physicians recruited from pediatric primary care practices in Philadelphia

Data Collection

Demographic characteristics :

- date of birth (DOB)
- physician training year
- gender
- race/ethnicity

Semi-structured interviews with Black men and their caregivers, separately

Focus groups with resident and attending physicians, separately

NVivo software for coding and analysis of transcripts

PLAN FOR ANALYSIS

NVivo software to develop and refine our code book

Iterative content analysis during the interviews and focus groups to determine emergent themes

Re-engage youth and caregiver participants to validate themes

LESSONS LEARNED

- Pilot testing
 - Helpful in refining interview and focus group guides
- Consider interaction of race in interviews and focus groups
 - Balancing race/ethnicity and gender in scheduled focus groups
- Limit social desirability bias
 - Thoughtful selection of focus group moderators
 - Focus group skills training
- Recruitment is a learning opportunity
 - Parental guilt in not yet having ‘The Talk’ with their youth
 - Discomfort with audio-recording
 - Residents not availing themselves of the opportunity to develop their skills in this topic despite interest in/energy around anti-racism activities

NEXT STEPS

- Content analysis: identify interview/focus group themes
 - Use validated themes to inform development of a conversation script on safely navigating police encounters
- Implement conversation script with physicians using a train-the-trainer model
 - Small-scale controlled trial
 - Compare baseline measures of self-efficacy, comfort, and frequency of engaging in anticipatory guidance about police encounters with two spaced assessments post-intervention
- Additional evaluation:
 - Assess how teens and caregivers with whom physicians have the conversation perceive it
 - Use feedback to refine training
 - Explore teen/caregiver perception of the pediatrician’s office as a resource and their connectedness to the office

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