

# Police Brutality's Impact on Black and Brown Mental Health

August 24th | 12pm-1:30pm PST

Zoom Webinar



UCSF California  
Preterm Birth  
Initiative



# The California Preterm Birth Initiative



This Collaboratory is hosted by the California Preterm Birth Initiative – our mission is to eliminate racial disparities in preterm birth and improve health outcomes for babies born too soon, through research, partnerships and education grounded in community wisdom.

The Collaboratory series aims to bring people together to think through and generate new ideas, collaborations and innovative approaches to preventing preterm delivery and improving outcomes for babies born too soon.



# A. Philip Randolph Institute San Francisco - Resilient Youth Leadership Program



The A. Philip Randolph Institute San Francisco Youth Chapter aims to advance the academic, collegiate and employment needs of youth throughout the City and County of San Francisco. This group is committed to the success of our youth through community service, positive social activities and internship opportunities, including the Resilient Youth Leadership Program.

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# Speakers



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# The impact of police brutality on the mental health of Black and Brown People

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# What is Police Brutality?

- Physical force, emotional and sexual violence, verbal assault and psychological intimidation (DeVylder et al. 2017)
- Any police (in)action that dehumanizes and degrades the victim, regardless of conscious intent ( Alang et al. 2017; Bandes 1999)

*“Plain and simple, if you fuck with me, I’m going to break your leg before you get the chance to run. I’m being honest; I don’t screw around.”*

**Minnesota police officer Rod Webber**

*“I never said I was going to run,” Joyland says in response.*

**Webber replies:** *“I’m just giving you a heads up. Just trying to be officer friendly right now. The only truth that matters is the one in the report.”*

# Police Brutality is Structural Racism

## *Historical context matters*

- Invasion of the Americas, and conquest and genocide of Indigenous Peoples.
- Monitoring and preventing enslaved Africans from escaping to freedom.
- Lynching Mexicans in the now US-Mexico boarder, with postcards of lynched persons captioned “Adios Amigos” distributed widely.

## Historical Context Matters

**Alang, S. (2018). “The more things change, the more things stay the same: race, ethnicity, and police brutality.” *AJPH* 108(9):1127.**

*“A patrol is kept upon each estate, and every slave found off the plantation without a pass is whipped on the spot. I knew a slave who started without a pass, one night, for a neighboring plantation, to see his wife: he was caught, tied to a tree, and flogged.”* Nehemiah Caulkins

*“Every colored stranger that walks the streets is suspected of being a runaway slave, hence he must be interrogated by every negro hater whom he meets, and should he not have a pass, he must be arrested and hurried off to jail.”* Horace Moulton

*“Duly appointed law officers played such a prominent role in leading and encouraging extralegal executions of Mexicans by securing the victims and sometimes even making sure that their bodies were brought to the center of the city as a warning to others.”*

# Police Brutality as Social Determinant of Health

## Mechanisms

- Fatal injuries that increase mortality rates
- Adverse physiological and psychological responses that increase likelihood of illness
- Racist public reactions that cause stress
- Arrests, incarcerations, and legal, medical, and funeral bills that cause financial strain
- Integrated oppressive structures that lead to disempowerment

(Alang et al. 2017)

## Police Brutality, Hyper Vigilance and Mental Health

- Does heightened vigilance explain the association between police brutality, depressed mood, and generalized anxiety among Black populations?

Heightened vigilance:

- “Living in a state of psychological arousal in order to monitor, respond to, and attempt to protect oneself from threats linked to potential experiences of discrimination and other dangers in one’s immediate environment.”  
(Williams 2018. p.420)
- Modification of individual behavior, appearance, and surroundings in order to protect oneself from discrimination

# METHODS

- Data: 2018 Survey of the Health of Urban Residents
- Police brutality: At least one negative experience with the police
- Heightened vigilance scale
- Mental Health: Depressed mood (PHQ-2) and Generalized Anxiety (GAD-2)
- Covariates: race/ethnicity, age, gender, employment status, level of education, self-rated health, limitations, and health insurance
- Multivariate logistic regressions , effect decomposition

# RESULTS

- Police brutality was associated with greater odds of depressed mood and anxiety.
- Heightened vigilance was positively associated with depressed mood and generalized anxiety.
- Heightened vigilance explained 11 percent of the total effect of perceived police brutality on depressed mood.
- Heightened vigilance explained 21 percent of the total effect of perceived police brutality on generalized anxiety.

## So What?

- Vigilance might be a mechanism to avoid exposure to police brutality or avoid discrimination, but it has the potential to harm mental health.
- Consider examining the extent to which police brutality, as well as the anticipation of potential exposure to police brutality, impacts the mental health of Black patients as part of the clinical assessment.
- Advocating for new systems of law enforcement as a matter of fostering psychological well-being, reducing unmet need and improving health outcomes.

# Police brutality and unmet need for mental health care

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**Abstract**

**Objective:** National movements have raised awareness of the adverse mental health effects of police brutality. This study examines the relationship between perceived police brutality and unmet need for mental health care.

**Data Sources:** We used the 2018 Survey of the Health of Urban Residents ( $N = 4338$ ), a quota sample survey of adults in urban areas in the contiguous United States.

**Study Design:** Multivariate regressions were used to understand the association between police brutality and unmet need for mental health care. Unmet need was regressed on police brutality (the independent variable), controlling for sociodemographic and health status characteristics of respondents and access to care. We then stratified the sample by experiences of police brutality (no negative encounters with the police, encounters that were perceived as necessary, and encounters that were considered unnecessary) and described how medical mistrust

## METHODS

- Data: 2018 Survey of the Health of Urban Residents
- Police brutality: (no negative encounter, necessary negative encounter, and unnecessary negative encounter)
- Unmet need: needed mental health care but did not get it
- Respect: Respondents rated if they were treated with a great deal of dignity in health care settings
- Mistrust: 12 item medical mistrust scale
- Covariates: race/ethnicity, age, gender, employment status, level of education, self-rated health, limitations, and health insurance, depressed mood, anxiety

# RESULTS

- Police brutality is associated with unmet need.
- Police brutality is associated with lower perceptions of respect in healthcare settings and with greater mistrust.
- Medical mistrust and respect matter more for those who experience police brutality.

No Negative encounter	Necessary negative encounter	Unnecessary negative encounter
Respect or mistrust does not affect odds of unmet need	Respect and mistrust affect unmet need	Respect and mistrust affect unmet need

## So What?

- Identifying and addressing barriers to psychiatric care common among populations disproportionately experiencing police brutality is critical.
- Structural understanding of causes of unmet need. Advocating for new systems of law enforcement.
- Cross-sectoral collaboration.

# Thank you!

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## Some stats on racial inequities in exposure

Black people are over four times more likely than White peers to sustain injuries from police intervention (Feldman et al. 2016).

Black, Native American and Latinx persons are more likely than Whites to be stopped and arrested by the police (Miller et al. 2017).

Being White protects White people from police use of force (Kahn et al. 2016)

From 2005-2012, the proportion of Black people killed by police was almost three times greater than White people.(Barber et al. 2016)

Police brutality is a leading cause of death among young men of color (Edwards et al. 2019)





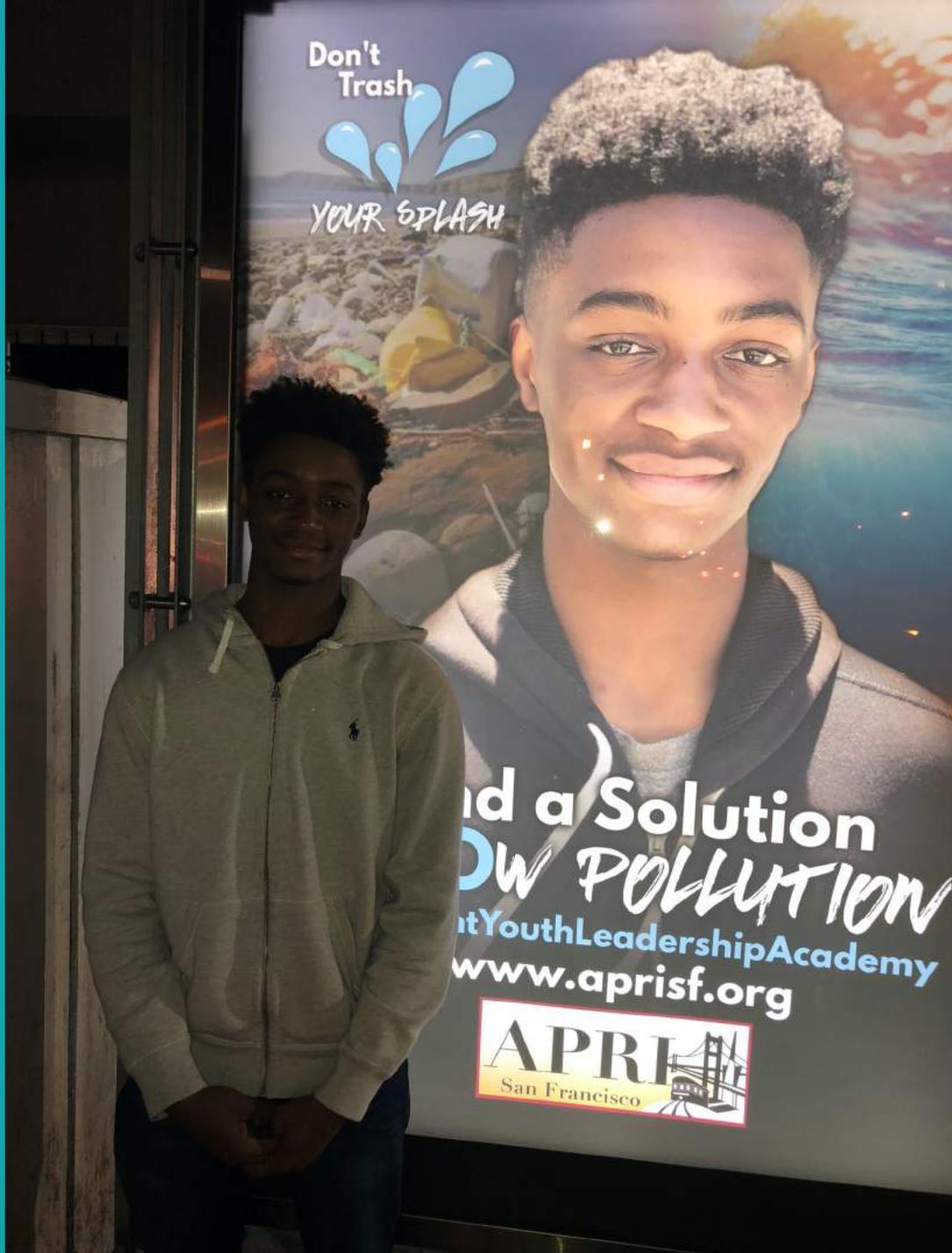




















# COVID-19 Birth Outcomes, and Vaccinations:

A Public Dialogue Led by  
Community Voices

**Sept. 30th | 12pm-1:30pm PST**

Zoom Webinar

**RSVP: [Bit.ly/COVIDVacBirth](https://bit.ly/COVIDVacBirth)**



UCSF California  
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Instagram LIVE!  
**Getting Black  
Breastfeeding Right:  
What You Can Do Now!**

In honor of Black Breastfeeding Week, we are hosting expert lactation consultants and breastfeeding queens to share how moms can be in an encouraging breastfeeding community and how hospital staff can support black families.

**AUGUST 25<sup>TH</sup> | 12:15pm PST**

Join us on Instagram LIVE @Voices4BirthJustice



**Brandi Gates-Burgess**  
Mom | Lactation & Infant  
Feeding Specialist  
[@breastfriends\\_oakland](#)



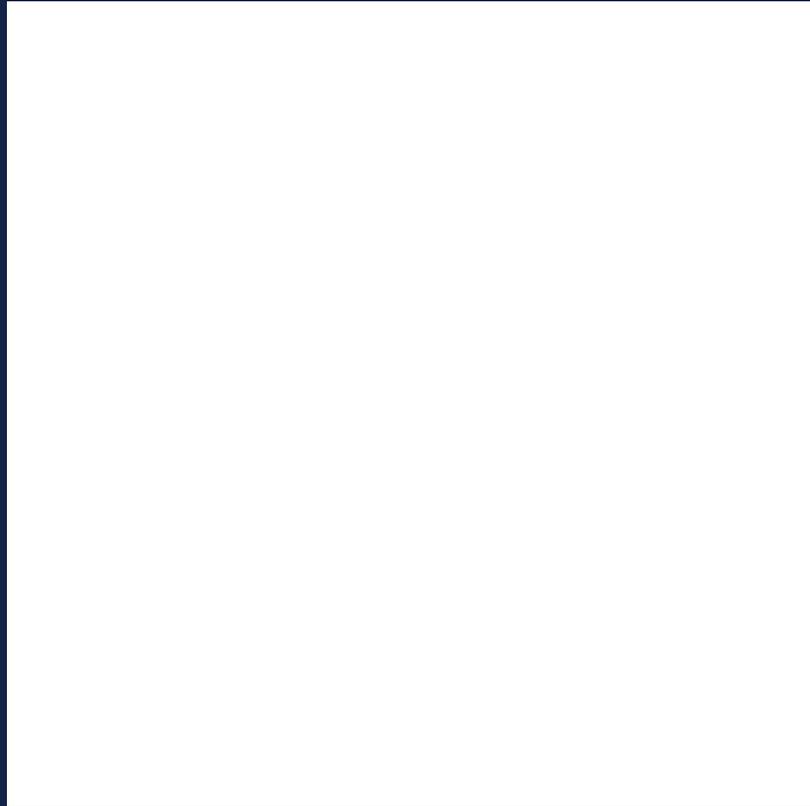
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Moderated by:  
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Thank You!



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