

Young British men view knife carrying as a 'legitimate response' to potential threats

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Knife carrying is seen as a legitimate response both to potential threats and to the lack of protection provided by authorities, according to a study of young white British males published in this week's *BMJ*.

In a letter to the journal, Damien Riggs from Flinders University in Australia and Marek Palasinski from Lancaster University in the UK, say that while they appreciate the call for an integrated approach to tackling knife crime, their findings point to further factors that require attention in terms of [injury prevention](#).

Their study also found that young men who do not carry knives were viewed as irresponsible and thus deserving of any violence they experience.

The authors therefore suggest that creating simple associations between knife carrying and immaturity or deviance "might prevent the success of campaigns aimed at reducing this behaviour."

They argue that preventing knife injuries "must involve promoting recognition of the low controllability and unpredictability of knives, demonstrating to young men that knives actually increase, rather than decrease, personal risk."

Their study also found that the [young men](#) regarded the consequences of being convicted of knife related violence (that is, a short time in prison) as relatively trivial.

This would suggest that longer imprisonments for knife related [convictions](#) is as important as increased policing of knife carrying, they conclude.

Provided by British Medical Journal

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