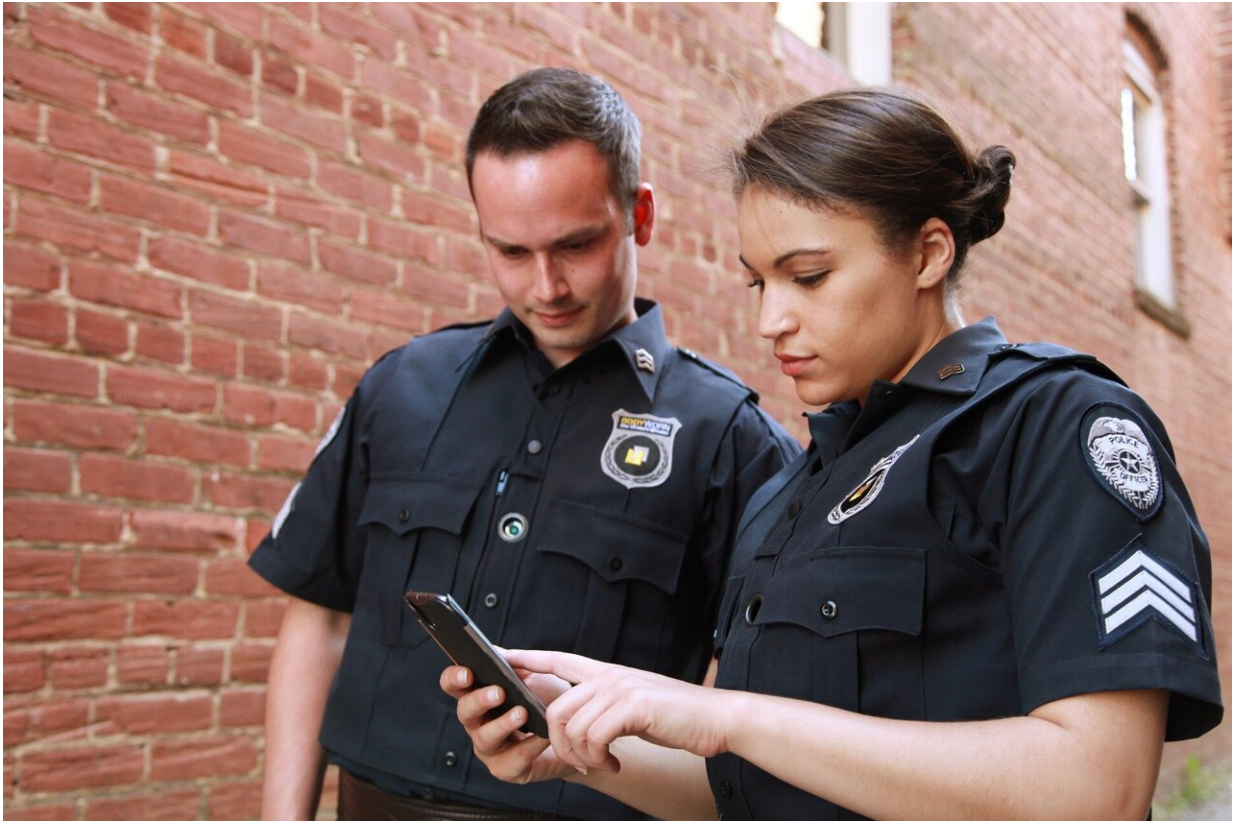


Current police response to intimate partner violence calls for change, researchers say

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Policing of intimate partner violence (IPV) may result in adverse consequences for survivors, according to a new study at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. However, the evidence

concerning the generalized consequences of IPV policing has not been comprehensively evaluated until now and the results call into question whether IPV policing benefits survivors.

This is the first review on the consequences of IPV policing in the U.S. The findings are published in the journal [Aggression and Violent Behavior](#).

IPV, which includes physical violence, [sexual violence](#), [psychological abuse](#), and other forms of coercion between current or former spouses or dating partners, impacts more than 40 percent of people in the U.S. The U.S. has long maintained a police-centric response to IPV despite increased recognition of the harms of mass criminalization and incarceration and growing calls for criminal legal reform.

Research on the effectiveness of IPV policing has primarily been limited to studies on the effect of arrest on individual revictimization. Despite about three decades of research on this topic, there is mixed evidence that arrest reduces subsequent victimization.

Moreover, little attention has been paid to other generalized consequences of IPV policing, such as police violence against [survivors](#), reduced help-seeking, survivor arrest, or child protective services involvement. The authors aimed to synthesize evidence on such generalized consequences and assess whether studies considered differential effects by race.

The authors searched Web of Science, ProQuest, and EBSCO Host for all scholarly articles published in 1980 or later. They restricted their analysis to the past 40 years because the police-centric response to IPV arose in the 1980s. In total, their scoping review uncovered 36 studies that assessed generalized consequences of IPV policing beyond individual revictimization.

"In essence, we found that survivor criminalization is the most studied consequence of IPV policing, and existing studies have documented a positive association between mandatory arrest laws and risk of survivor arrest," said Sandhya Kajeepeta, a researcher in the Department of Epidemiology at Columbia Mailman School, and first author.

"Additional longitudinal studies would strengthen understanding of the causal nature of this relationship."

The authors also identified gaps in the [evidence base](#), including a lack of studies focused on police violence or child protective services involvement as potential consequences of IPV policing despite case studies suggesting that these are consequences of IPV policing.

"With a dearth of research on police violence, child protective services involvement, and survivor health outcomes as potential consequences of IPV policing, there is no doubt that additional research is necessary—not only on the potential consequences of IPV policing such as [police violence](#) against survivors, but also on involving child protective services, and the psychosocial and physical health outcomes of survivors," said Seth Prins, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Epidemiology and senior author.

Kajeepeta also points out that only 31 percent of studies included a racial analysis of the consequences of IPV policing. "Of the studies that assessed differences among Black and white survivors, some found that Black survivors experienced more pronounced adverse outcomes compared to their white counterparts, suggesting there may be a racialized impact of IPV policing."

"For example, one study documented that IPV arrest was associated with an increased risk of victim all-cause mortality, and this effect was largely explained by the effect among Black participants: arrest increased mortality by 98 percent among Black victims compared to 9 percent

among white victims."

"The existing evidence demonstrates that there is an urgent need to critically re-evaluate the current police-centric response to IPV, including the widespread use of mandatory arrest laws. Current carceral and police-centric policies have societal costs and have disparate impacts on Black communities," said Kajeepeta.

More information: Sandhya Kajeepeta et al, Generalized and racialized consequences of the police response to intimate partner violence in the U.S.: A systematic scoping review, *Aggression and Violent Behavior* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.avb.2024.101947](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2024.101947)

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