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One figure

The Mental Health Consequences Before and After a Historic Police Killing in Minneapolis in Black and White Communities

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Police violence, a form of structural racism, is a fundamental cause of health inequity. The direct and indirect exposure of police violence leads to a variety of negative health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, trauma symptoms, and suicide attempts. Given the long history of police violence and brutality, the high profile police killing of George Floyd is likely to have an aftermath of negative health consequences, particularly among Black people in Minneapolis. Our study evaluated the rate of mental health diagnoses after the murder of George Floyd on May 25th, 2020 in Black and white communities in Minneapolis, Minnesota. All results are based on the Minnesota Hospital Association discharge data merged to data from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minneapolis Police Department, and the American Community Survey. We analyzed the data using interrupted time series models at the week-level and random-effects panel models at the ZCTA-week level to assess the change in mental health diagnoses in response to the murder of George Floyd. All final models were adjusted for weather, police use of force incidents, police stops, officer-involved shootings, the inception of COVID-19 State of Emergency order, and the introduction and conclusion of this Stay-at-Home order. After adjustment, we find a 0.23 per 100,000 increase in mental health conditions among Black people in the immediate post-murder period, followed by a weekly decline (-.007) in mental health diagnoses. By comparison, we find a 0.06 per 100,000 increase in mental health conditions among white people in the immediate post-murder period, followed by a weekly decline (-.004) in mental health diagnoses. These findings speak to the traumatizing effects of police violence and the short- and longer-term public health consequences for communities, particularly Black communities.