

Young Men in Neighborhoods with Cure Violence Programs Adopt Attitudes Less Supportive of Violence

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New York City neighborhoods operating **Cure Violence** programs show stronger declines in violence-endorsing attitudes than do areas without Cure Violence programs. According to data collected by the **NYCure** study at **JohnJayREC**, the presence of Cure Violence in a neighborhood is associated with significant reductions in the willingness of young men to use violence in conflict situations.

About Cure Violence

Cure Violence assumes that violence-endorsing attitudes are shared through social networks, transferred from individuals to groups, and may be eventually embraced by entire communities. To counter such contagions, Cure Violence staff conduct public education campaigns to shift community attitudes while they work to establish confidential relationships with the neighborhood residents most likely to participate in violence. Drawing upon these relationships, Cure Violence workers teach program participants how to avoid violent conflicts and how to connect with community resources that promote educational attainment and labor market success.

Methods

Between 2014 and 2016, researchers surveyed young men ages 18 to 30 in eight New York neighborhoods with matching demographics and crime rates. Four of the neighborhoods operated Cure Violence programs and four served as comparison sites. Researchers recruited survey respondents from each neighborhood using a method known as **respondent-driven sampling**. The study measured attitudes among young men in general and did not attempt to identify which respondents may have been Cure Violence participants.

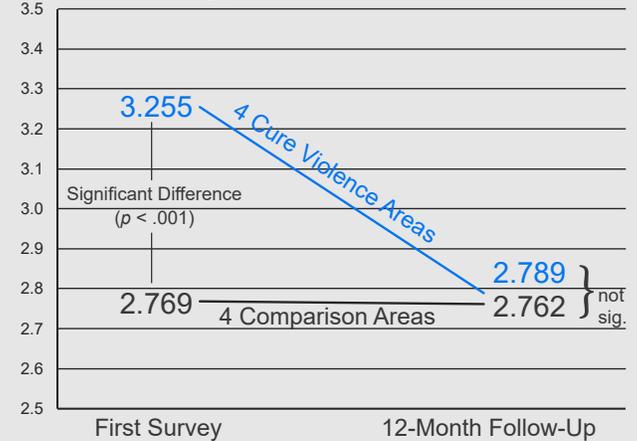
Survey respondents indicated (anonymously) whether they would use violence in a range of hypothetical conflict scenarios. Responses were combined into a 17-item **Violence Index**. Researchers analyzed data from all eight neighborhoods and compared Violence Index scores across two sequential survey waves: either 2014–2015 or 2015–2016. Each survey was cross-sectional, but more than a third of all respondents indicated that they participated in more than one wave.

Regression analysis estimated the intervention effect of Cure Violence with an interaction term (survey wave X intervention) and other control variables, such as respondent’s age (-), current employment (-), trust in community institutions (-), trust in police and other public safety organizations (-), having personal experiences with “stop & frisk” police encounters (+), reporting typical bedtime after 2 a.m. (+), seeing or hearing guns in the neighborhood (+), and the number of times a respondent reported being personally “shot at” (+).

Conclusion

Young men living in neighborhoods with Cure Violence programs reported significant reductions in their willingness to use violence compared with men in similar areas without programs. Regression analysis explained 20 percent of the total variance in violence-related norms with significant reductions in willingness to use violence among young men in Cure Violence areas (-14%) and no significant change among residents in matched comparison neighborhoods.

Violence Index: Respondent’s Willingness to Use Violence in 17 Hypothetical Conflict Scenarios



Regression Model Predicting Violence Index Score

| Predictor Variables | B | p |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-------|
| Interaction (wave X intervention) | -0.459 | 0.000 |
| Time (survey wave) | -0.007 | 0.884 |
| Intervention (Cure Violence=1) | 0.945 | 0.000 |
| Respondent age | -0.044 | 0.000 |
| Currently employed | -0.041 | 0.060 |
| Trust in community institutions | -0.053 | 0.001 |
| Trust in police/public safety | -0.063 | 0.001 |
| ‘Stop & frisk’ police encounters | 0.015 | 0.003 |
| Typical bedtime > 2 a.m. | 0.019 | 0.000 |
| See/hear guns in neighborhood | 0.092 | 0.000 |
| Number of times ‘shot at’ | 0.068 | 0.000 |

R-squared 0.20

Note: The interaction term represents the effects of Cure Violence intervention over time. Cure Violence programs were launched in New York City at varying points of time beginning in 2011. Program sites had been operating 1 to 3 years at the time of the first survey. The analysis tested for site-specific effects using a series of dummy variables. The interaction term remained significant after accounting for this site-specific heterogeneity.

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