LEGAL INTERVENTION
A LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR BLACK MEN

WHAT IS LEGAL INTERVENTION?
Injuries inflicted by the police or other law-enforcing agents, including military on duty, in the course of arresting or attempting to arrest lawbreakers, suppressing disturbances, maintaining order, and other legal actions. Excludes injuries caused by civil insurrections.

PREVENTION
The National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) data are used to assist the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policies designed to reduce and prevent these deaths and injuries at the national, state, and local levels.

To reduce risk of harm from law enforcement, refrain from:

- Fleeing a known police officer if detained
- Threatening a police officer in any manner
- Physically struggling with a police officer while being handcuffed
- Physically struggling while in a police vehicle
- Attempting to attack a police officer while being placed under arrest
- Concealing a weapon of any kind, for any reason

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

WHO IS AT RISK?
Black men experience both higher rates of victimization by violent crime and higher arrest rates than White men, thus providing increased opportunities for interaction with police.

In a study examining U.S. mortality due to legal intervention for the years between 1979 through 1997, where mortality was stratified by race and sex, death rates of Black males on average were 4.7 times those of White males from 1979 to 1988 and averaged 3.2 times higher from 1988 to 1997.

Deaths due to legal intervention occur disproportionately among young adults, an age group that contributes substantially to the workforce and whose members have decades of potentially useful life ahead of them. Thus, it is likely that the true impact of deaths due to legal intervention, measured by years of productive life lost, is greater than that suggested by an analysis of death rates alone.

Likelihood of experiencing force or threat of force

Figure 1:
Age & race specific rates of death due to legal intervention for males.

Data from the US Department of Justice suggests that in interactions between police officers and citizens, Blacks are up to 3 times more likely than Whites to experience “force or the threat of force.”

RESOURCES

For more information contact cdc.gov