

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Black and Hispanic/Latino individuals are disproportionately represented in law enforcement encounters that result in health and socioeconomic disparities. We aim to investigate racial/ethnic disparities in police encounters and arrests in a public university setting at the University of Colorado's (CU) Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora, Colorado.

Methods

We performed a retrospective analysis of 5118 Anschutz CU police encounters from 2010 to 2019. Data was collected from police encounters documented by the campus police department. We evaluated for associations between race/ethnicity with proportions of arrest and the type of crime committed during police encounter. We calculated risk ratios (RR) with 95% confidence intervals (CI) using Poisson regression.

Results

13.2% of police encounters resulted in arrests. Black and Hispanic/Latino individuals were 1.52 and 1.41 times more likely to have an encounter lead to arrest compared to White individuals, respectively after adjusting for age, sex, crime classification, and reason for being on campus. Black individuals were 7.79 times more likely to be arrested for a suspicious incident and American Indian/Alaskan Native individuals were 5.5 times more likely to be arrested for an assault than White individuals. American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black and Hispanic/Latino individuals were more likely to be arrested if they were unaffiliated with the campus.

Conclusion

Black and Hispanic/Latino individuals are at higher risk of arrests than White individuals at a public research university and medical campus setting. Disparities in arrest rates in racial and ethnic minorities at a research University may result in increased mistrust with health and medical institutions.

Keywords: Police Encounters, Racial Profiling, Criminal Justice, Public Health, Social Inequality, Systemic Racism, Racial Bias, Health Equity