

Emergency Psychiatric Help for Neurodiverse Youth

Should we still be calling 911?

Ravi Ramasamy, MD

Attending Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine Unit
Seattle Children's Hospital

Acting Assistant Professor
University of Washington School of Medicine

Disclosures

- Ravi Ramasamy has no financial relationships relevant to this presentation to disclose.
- All planners have no relevant financial relationships to disclose.

UW Medicine

UW SCHOOL
OF MEDICINE

Objectives

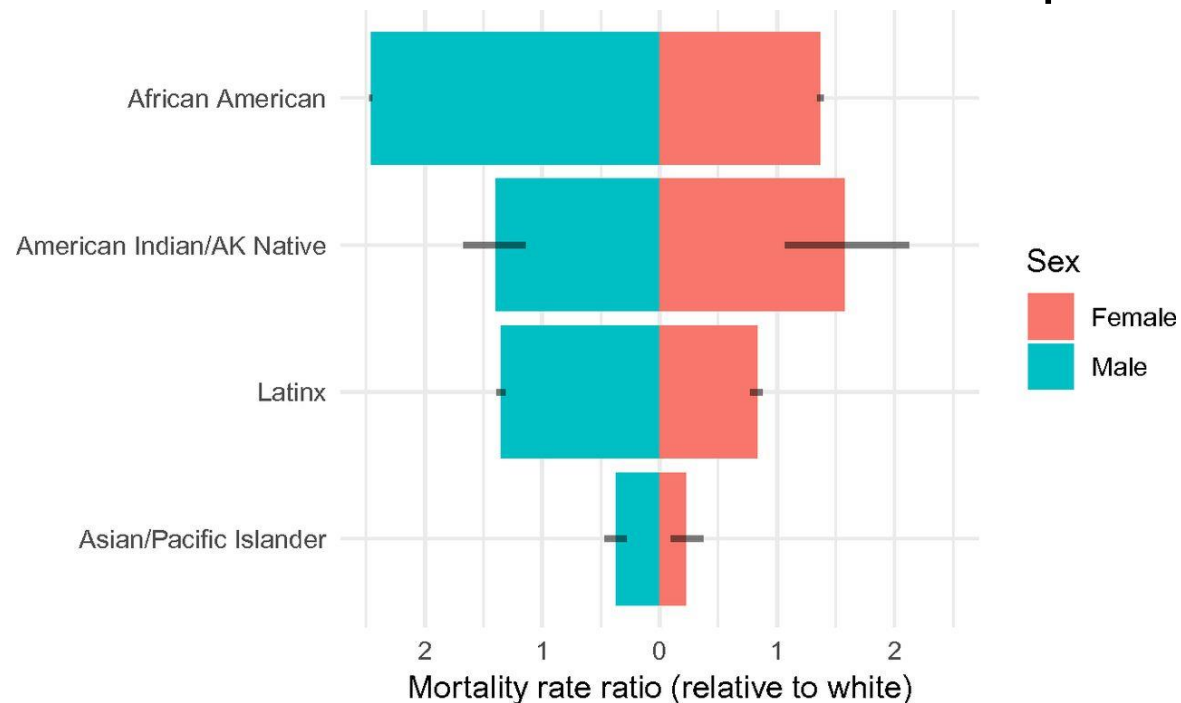
1. Identify the pros and cons of calling 911 and/or involving law enforcement in psychiatric emergencies for neurodiverse youth
2. Identify ways of improving the chances of safety when seeking emergency psychiatric help, and when calling 911
3. Identify some alternatives to calling 911 that exist elsewhere that may serve as a model for our community

Outline

- Background and Overview of current context
 - The safety risk to neurodiverse youth when calling 911
- Accessing emergency psychiatric care for neurodiverse youth in crisis
 - Maximizing safety when calling 911
- Alternatives to law enforcement response in psychiatric emergencies
- Questions and Discussion with Panelists

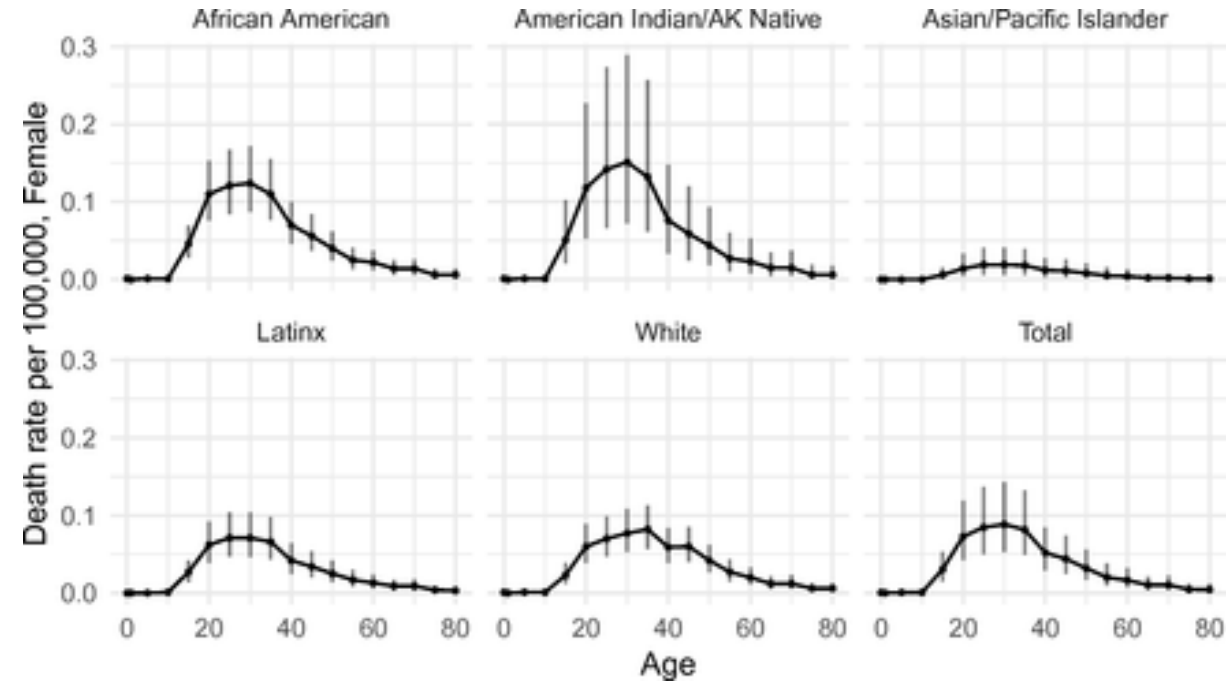
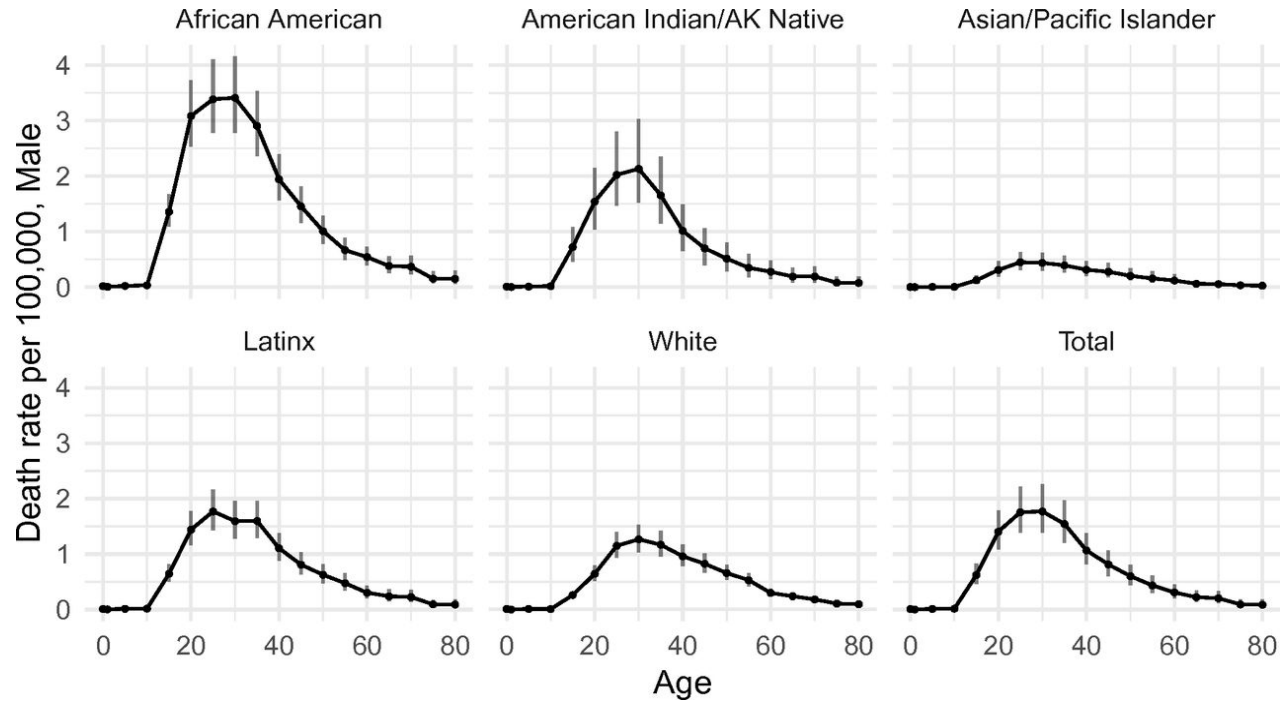
Morbidity/mortality of law enforcement encounters

- Lifetime mortality risk from law enforcement per 100,000 (2013-18)
 - Identifying as male: 52
 - Identifying as female: 3
- Racial/ethnic minorities are at increased risk compared to whites



Morbidity/mortality of law enforcement encounters

Age-related risk



Law enforcement involvement in mental health crises

- 8.3 million Americans suffer from a severe mental illness (4% of population)
 - Nearly half are untreated on any given day
- 1/3 of people with severe mental illness have first contact with mental health treatment through a law enforcement encounter
 - 10% of police calls
 - 1/3 of people taken to hospital for mental health crisis are transported by police
- People with severe mental illness are 4x as likely to be incarcerated on low-level charges
 - 20% of prison/jail cells
- People with severe mental illness account for at least 25% (potentially up to 50%) of fatal police encounters
 - 16x more likely to be killed by police than any other civilian during an encounter

Neurodiverse youth have unique risk factors

- Children with disabilities experience ACEs at higher rates and are at increased risk for mental illness
- Particularly vulnerable to violence
 - Highest risk of being victims of crime
 - 2x as likely to be victims of violent crime
 - Nearly half of people killed by police have a disability
 - 33-50% of all use-of-force incidents involve a person with a disability
- Increased risk of ending up alone/unsupervised
 - 50% of children with autism may elope (30% of age 7-10)
 - 50% go missing
 - 1/3 who elope cannot communicate identifying information
- Risk factors are cumulative!

Recent examples around the country

- Linden Cameron
 - 13 y/o white male with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Salt Lake City, UT
 - On Sept 4, 2020, his mother called 911 because he was experiencing a mental health crisis, asking for a crisis intervention team to help her son get treatment, and specifically said he is unarmed
 - When police arrived at home, Linden ran away, and when he did not comply with officer's request to "get down on the ground" was shot (survived)
- Preston Wolf
 - 17 y/o male with Autism Spectrum Disorder and ADHD in Vacaville, CA
 - On April 25, 2021 while riding a scooter was thrown to the ground and punched in the head by a police officer, then threatened to be hurt even more

Why Does this Happen?

- Police Academies nationwide spend a median of 58 hours on firearm training, and 8 hours on de-escalation or crisis intervention
- Police are not trained to provide any kind of health care beyond emergency life-saving measures
- 10% of calls to police are for mental health crises, but may take up to 90% more resources than a call not involving mental illness
- The intersection of structural and systemic racism, ableism, and discrimination with the institution of law enforcement
- Law enforcement in the United States are armed and trained to respond to situations similarly to military personnel

How can parents and providers maximize safety

- Meet the Police Toolkit (National Autism Association)
 - Also, free and downloadable for parents/caregivers who are concerned for their loved one's safety in the community
 - Purpose is to help enhance the quality of interactions between individuals with autism and law enforcement
- Smart 911 (supported throughout King County and Seattle)
 - Free service that enables parents/caregivers to provide more information about themselves or their household to 911 in case of emergencies later on
 - Once profile is created, when anyone dials 911 from a phone associated with the profile, call takers have access to the information provided (including any medical conditions)
 - Recommended by Seattle Police Department for anyone with autism, developmental disabilities, or deaf/hard of hearing
- What Youth Need to Know if They are Questioned by Police (Pacer Center)
 - Tips for parents to prepare their child with a disability if they come into contact with law enforcement
 - Information on what parents should do if their child is detained or arrested (school or community)

For wandering/elopement

- Big Red Safety Box (National Autism Association)
 - For individuals with Autism who may be prone to wandering/eloping
 - Free-of-charge toolkit given to families to educate, raise awareness, and provide tools for preventing and responding to elopement emergencies
 - Includes a first-responder profile form, ID bracelet/shoe tag, door/window alarms
- Family Wandering Emergency Plan (AWAARE)
- Autism Wandering Prevention brochure
- Alert your neighbors
 - Hello Neighbors Template
- Tracking Devices (may be available through local law enforcement)
 - Project Lifesaver
 - LoJack SafetyNet
 - AngelSense

911 Alternatives in King County

- Children's Crisis Outreach Response System (CCORS)
 - Youth not enrolled in King County Mental Health Plan
 - Mobile Crisis Outreach: available 24/7
 - non-emergent appointments within 24-48 hours
 - In-home crisis stabilization for up to 8 weeks after crisis
 - Family/Caregiver makes referral (1-866-4CRISIS)
- Intensive Stabilization Services (ISS)
 - Youth enrolled in mental health services through a Medicaid benefit with King County Behavioral Health Organization
 - Brief therapeutic interventions, parent skill building
 - Mental Health provider must make referral (call Sandy Tomlin @ 206-263-8957)
- Wraparound with Intensive Services (WISe)
 - Medicaid-eligible youth (MIDD for non-Medicaid youth) up to 21 years old
 - Anyone can refer, through a mental health agency (WISe) or by faxing referral form available on website
- Crisis Connections
 - 24 hour crisis line: 866 427 4747
 - Teen Link: 866-833-6546
 - King County 2-1-1: get connected to resources (housing, financial, food)

Unarmed Mobile Crisis Response Elsewhere

- Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets (CAHOOTS)
 - Run by the White Bird Clinic in Eugene, OR since 1989; 24H service
 - Reroutes 911 and non-emergency calls relating to mental health, substance use, or homelessness to team of medics and crisis-care workers
 - Receives 24,000 calls/year, with 17% of Eugene police calls redirected to them
 - Only 150 of the 24,000 calls directed to CAHOOTS required police backup (2019)
- Support Team Assistance Response (STAR)
 - Started in June 2020 in Denver, CO
 - 911 calls diverted to a 2-person team (medic and clinician) staffed from 10 AM to 6 PM on weekdays
 - In first 6 months, responded to 748 of 2500 emergency calls that fell under purview; no calls required police assistance or led to arrest
- Crisis Response Unit
 - Began in 2019 in Olympia, WA; yearly budget is \$550,000
 - 911 calls diverted to two crisis responders daily from 7 AM to 9 PM
 - Nearly 700 calls in first two months
- Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (Oakland, CA): launching 1-year pilot this year
- NYC Pilot Program: 2 precincts where EMTs and crisis counselors respond to mental health calls instead of police

References

The Role and Impact of Law Enforcement in Transporting Individuals with Severe Mental Illness, a National Survey; May 2019; TreatmentAdvocacyCenter.org/Road-Runners

The Role of Mental Illness in Fatal Law Enforcement Encounters; December 2015; TACReports.org/overlooked-undercounted

Edwards F, Lee H, Esposito M. Risk of being killed by police use of force in the United States by age, race-ethnicity, and sex. Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2019;116:16793-8.

Hatton C, Emerson E. The relationship between life events and psychopathology amongst children with intellectual disabilities. Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities. 2004; 17:109-17.

Perry DM, Carter-Long L. The ruderman white paper on media coverage of law enforcement use of force and disability: a media study (1013-15) and overview. March 2016.

10 Facts Law Enforcement Needs to Know; National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability NCCJD; 2015

Angel Sense GPS system Wandering Booklet

[A 13-year-old boy with autism was shot by police after his mother called for help managing a 'mental breakdown' - CNN](#)

[Cop Punches Autistic Teen in Face and Threatens to Hurt Him More \(tmz.com\)](#)

<https://www.policeforum.org/assets/30%20guiding%20principles.pdf>

<https://www.psychiatrictimes.com/view/cahoots-model-prehospital-mental-health-crisis-intervention>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/02/06/denver-sent-mental-health-help-not-police-hundreds-calls/4421364001/>

<https://www.theolympian.com/news/local/article230718039.html>

<https://peersnet.org/2021/04/05/oaklands-macro-program-pilots-non-police-mental-health-crisis-response/>

Resources

Toolkits:

[NAA's Big Red Safety Box® | National Autism Association](http://www.nationalautismassociation.org/store/#!/NAAs-Meet-the-Police-Toolkit)
www.nationalautismassociation.org/store/#!/NAAs-Meet-the-Police-Toolkit
www.seattle.gov/police/need-help/smart-911-program

Websites:

Awaare.org
Nationalautismassociation.org/safetytoolkit
Autismsafetyproject.org
Autism-society.org
PACER.org

Child Safety Products:

Mypreciouskid.com
SelectAutismMerchandise.com
Tattooswithapurpose.com
Autismservicedogsofamerica.com
4pawsforabililty.org

Tracking Systems and Medical Devices:

Project Lifesaver: projectlifesaver.org
LoJack SafetyNet: lojacksafetynet.com
EmFinders: emfinders.com
Caretrak Systems: caretrak.com
Alzheimer's Comfort Zone: alz.org/comfortzone
Medicalert: medicalert.com
A Child is Missing: achildismissing.org
AngelSense GPS System: angelsense.com

For First Responders and Caregivers:

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children:
missingkids.com | 1-800-THE-LOST
Autism Risk Management:
autismriskmanagement.com
The Autism & Law Enforcement Education Coalition:
sncarc.org/alec.htm
The Law Enforcement Awareness Network
leanonus.org
Autism Alliance for Local Emergency Responder
Training: AutismAlert.org
King County Crisis Services: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/mental-health-substance-abuse/services/crisis-services.aspx>
Crisis Connections: <https://www.crisisconnections.org/>

Questions

THANK YOU!

Contact information:

Ravi.Ramasamy@seattlechildrens.org