
Title registration for a systematic review: The impacts of body-worn cameras in policing: a systematic review

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Submitted to the Coordinating Group of:

- Crime and Justice
- Education
- Disability
- International Development
- Nutrition
- Food Security
- Social Welfare
- Methods
- Knowledge Translation and Implementation
- Business and Management
- Other:

Plans to co-register:

- No
- Yes Cochrane Other
- Maybe

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Title of the review

The impacts of body-worn cameras in policing: a systematic review

Background

Body-worn cameras (BWCs) are one of the most rapidly diffusing technologies in policing today, costing agencies and their municipalities millions of dollars. Driven by operational imperatives to reduce assaults by and on police, reduce complaints, enhance legitimacy and improve investigative outcomes, BWCs have been adopted rapidly by police forces in the USA, the UK, and other nations. This roll out has been subject to a substantial program of experimental research and narrative reviews, but, as yet, no systematic review to collectively analyse the available data and assist policy makers and practitioners understand the potentially varied and complex effects of this technology.

Policy relevance

Regardless of the evidence-base, BWCs have already rapidly diffused into law enforcement and many agencies will continue to adopt them. Policy implications from available evidence are not clear cut, but they suggest that BWCs will not be an easy panacea for improving police performance, accountability, and relationships with citizens (Lum et al. 2018). The question of the effectiveness of BWCs urgently requires a more thorough exploration and systematic review to help practitioners understand the most and least effective ways to deploy BWCs.

Objectives

This review will synthesize a variety of BWC studies. These studies focus on various outcomes, as described by Lum et al. 2018, including, where available: the impact of BWCs on officer behaviour; officer attitudes about BWCs; the impact of BWCs on citizen behaviour; citizen and community attitudes about BWCs; the impact of BWCs on criminal investigations; and the impact of BWCs on the management of law enforcement organizations.

Existing reviews

A comprehensive narrative review of BWC research through March of 2018 was conducted by Lum et al. (2018). Other earlier narrative reviews based on smaller subsets of studies were conducted by White (2014); Lum et al. (2015); and Maskaly et al. (2017). None of these were systematic Campbell reviews.

Intervention

The intervention examined in this systematic review is the use of BWCs in public police agencies and the impacts of that use on a variety of outcomes as aforementioned. The comparison condition in evaluation studies is officers who are not wearing or given BWCs.

Population

We are interested in the impact of BWCs on police officers, police organizations (including police officer shifts and different organizational units), citizens exposed/not exposed to BWCs, and communities.

Outcomes

This systematic review will include studies of BWCs that examine the impact of BWCs on (1) officer behaviours; (2) officer attitudes about BWCs; (3) citizen behaviours; (4) citizen and community attitudes about BWCs; (5) criminal investigations; and (6) the management of law enforcement organizations.

Study designs

Given the six outcome measure of interest as described above, we will include all quasi-experimental and experimental studies related to these outcomes as well as rigorous survey analyses related to #2 and #4, above.

References

Lum, C., Koper, C.S., Merola, L., Scherer, J.A., & Reioux, A. (2015). *Existing and ongoing body worn camera research: Knowledge gaps and opportunities*. Report for the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. Fairfax, VA: Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, George Mason University.

Lum, C., Stoltz, M., Koper, C.S., & Scherer, J.A. (2018). The research on body-worn cameras: What we know, what we need to know. Unpublished paper currently under review. Fairfax, VA: George Mason University.

Maskaly, J., Donner, C., Jennings, W.G., Ariel, B., & Sutherland, A. (2017). The effects of body-worn cameras (BWCs) on police and citizen outcomes: A state-of-the-art review. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 40(4), 672-688.

Merola, L., Lum, C., Koper, C.S., & Scherer, J.A. (2016). *Body worn cameras and the courts: A national survey of state prosecutors*. Report for the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. Fairfax, VA: Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, George Mason University.

White, Michael D. 2014. Police officer body-worn cameras: Assessing the evidence. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

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Other co-authors will include those involved in the search process, to include Lorraine Mazerolle and Elizabeth Eggins (University of Queensland) and Angela Higginson (Queensland University of Technology) as well as research assistants Megan Stoltz and Xiaoyun Wu of George Mason University.

Roles and responsibilities

Give a brief description of content and methodological expertise within the review team. It is recommended to have at least one person on the review team who has content expertise, at least one person who has methodological expertise and at least one person who has statistical expertise. It is also recommended to have one person with information retrieval expertise.

Please note that this is the *recommended optimal* review team composition.

- Content: Lum and Koper
- Systematic review methods: Lum, Koper, Wilson
- Statistical analysis: Lum, Koper, Wilson, and Wu
- Information retrieval: Mazerolle, Eggins, Higginson, and Stoltz

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Potential conflicts of interest

None of the authors have been involved in an evaluation of BWCs in a police agency. We also have not received any payment or have had any contractual agreements with any technology company who manufacturers or sells BWCs, or who profits from sales of BWCs to law enforcement agencies. We have conducted two narrative reviews of BWC research (Lum et al., 2015; Lum et al., 2018), and have conducted a survey of prosecutors and their use of BWCs (Merola et al., 2016).

Preliminary timeframe

Note, if the protocol or review is not submitted within six months and 18 months of title registration, respectively, the review area is opened up for other authors.

- Date you plan to submit a draft protocol: 31 December 2018
- Date you plan to submit a draft review: 31 December 2019