A Multi-Method Investigation of Officer Decision-Making and Force Used or Avoided in Arrest Situations:
Tulsa, Oklahoma Police Department Administrative Data Analysis

The International Association of Chiefs of Police/University of Cincinnati Center for Police Research and Policy (the IACP/UC Research Center), in conjunction with the University of Texas at San Antonio, examined officer decision-making during use-of-force encounters within the Tulsa, Oklahoma, Police Department (TPD). The goal of this investigation was to provide a better understanding of police use of force and factors that contribute to use-of-force situations.

The IACP/UC Research Center analyzed 31,950 arrests made by the TPD between January 1, 2016 and June 30, 2018. About 1.7% of these arrests resulted in use of force. Within the larger set of arrests, 642 were further analyzed to examine the likelihood of injury to both officers and suspects. To analyze these incidents, researchers identified four main categories of characteristics:

- Community member characteristics
- Officer characteristics
- Incident characteristics
- Contextual characteristics

Some key findings include:

- Unsurprisingly, a suspect’s level of the resistance was the factor most strongly related to officer injury. The more the suspect resisted, the more likely the officer was to be injured.
- There was no significant relationship found between a suspect’s race and an officer’s use of force, independent of other factors.
- Male suspects were more likely to be involved in incidents involving force than were female suspects.
- Younger suspects were more likely to be involved in use-of-force incidents than were older suspects.
- Officer characteristics (age, sex, experience level) were not significantly associated with injury in use of force.
- 54% of use-of-force incidents resulted in suspect member injury (most were minor injuries), and 12% resulted in officer injury.

From this analysis, researchers made the following recommendations:

- Expand use-of-force data collection and documentation of force to include injuries and suspect demeanor.
- Capture instances where deadly force could have been used but was not used.
- Review use-of-force policy and training across the department.