

Authors' Response

Sir,

We thank Dr. Copeland for his interest in our article (1). He states that our article was "lacking in certain areas." We agree that there are many aspects of a police shooting that can be examined. Unfortunately, one article cannot be all-inclusive. He suggests several areas to investigate including the number of police calls to a certain neighborhood, solo versus two person patrols, visibility of the suspect (lighting), and experience of the officer. We agree that these would be interesting aspects to examine. We are confident that he is aware of the limitations of reporting all data as his paper also did not address these very same issues (2).

With regard to the justification issue, although he states that justification was examined in his studies, we could not find in his cited study (2) any of the results he describes in his letter. We

believe that the medical examiner's role is not to determine justification; however, we did consider and report the legal investigation of these shootings. We noted "in two of the reported deaths, the shootings were deemed criminally unjustified as the police officers were indicted by a grand jury."

References

1. Gill JR, Pasquale-Styles M. Firearm deaths by law enforcement. *J Forensic Sci* 2009;54(1):185–8.
2. Copeland AR. Police shootings. The Metropolitan Dade County experience from 1956 to 1982. *Am J Forensic Med Pathol* 1986;7:39–45.

James Gill,¹ M.D. and Melissa Pasquale-Styles,² M.D.

¹Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, 520 First Ave, New York, NY 10016.

²NYC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, 599 Winthrop Street, Brooklyn, NY 11203.

E-mail: jgill@ocme.nyc.gov