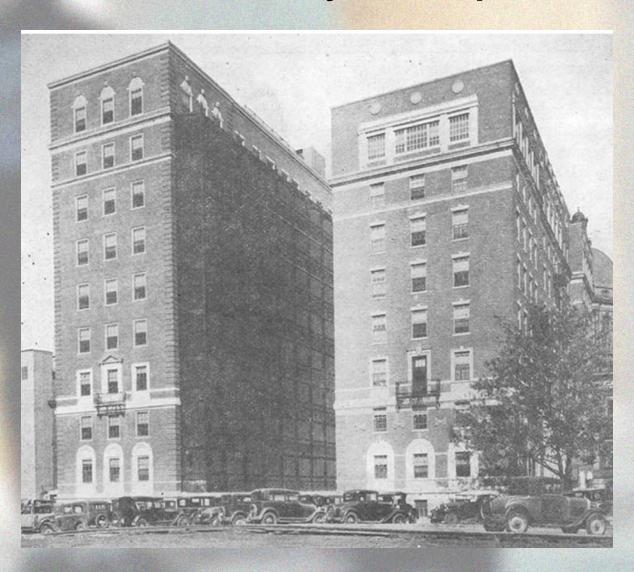
# Trauma, Urban Violence and African American Men: Envisioning New Pathways to Healing

John A. Rich, MD, MPH
Malcolm Peterson Lecture
Society of General Internal Medicine
Annual Meeting
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# **Boston City Hospital**



## Young Men's Health Clinic

- Founded in 1992 and based in Primary Care
- Focused on men ages 17-29
- Designed to serve as a "bridge" from adolescent to adult primary care and as a "door" to community services
- Initially sought referrals from within the hospital but quickly expanded to community referrals
- Enhanced with Health Educator and Psychologist
- Most men had few helping institutions in their lives
- Most had profound experiences of trauma

## Patients in the Young Men's Health Clinic

Uninsured - 80%

Never seen a doctor – 20%

Never seen a dentist – 25%

Violent injury in the past – 45%

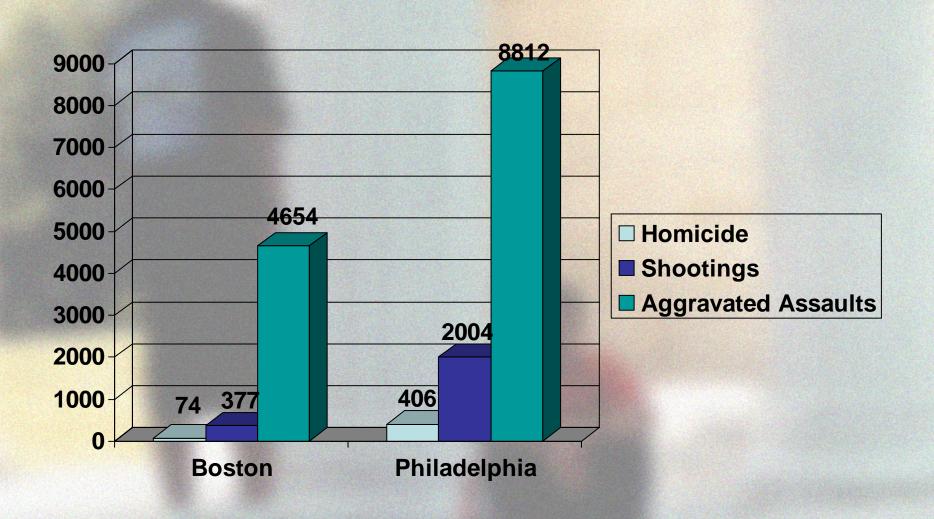
Witnessed a shooting or stabbing – 51%

Do not feel safe - 25%

Harassed by the police – 44%



#### Violence in Philadelphia and Boston, 2006



## A City's Deadly Toll

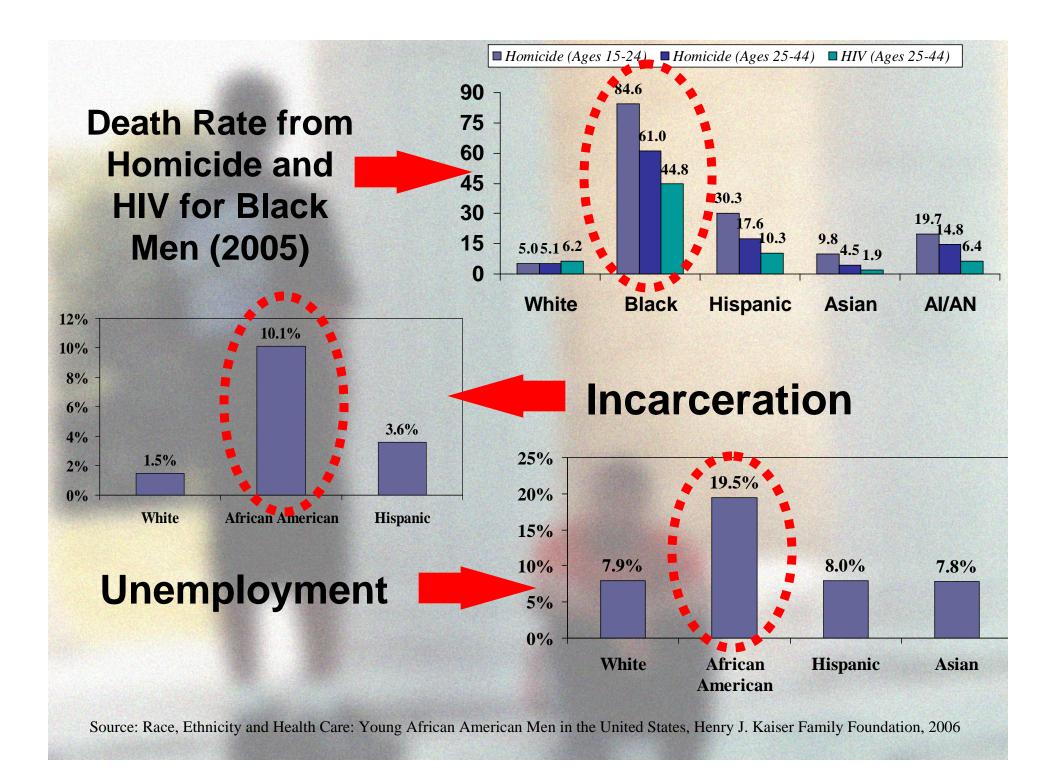
Homicides reported by city police through 11:59 p.m. Wednesday:

Total for the same period in 2006: 104

philly @com

For a map showing homicides in Philadelphia for 2006, along with articles about urban violence, visit http://go.philly.com/violence

# Issues Facing Young African American Men



## The Health Effects of Trauma

# Consequences of Trauma

Hypervigilance, Jumpiness Depression **Avoidance Nightmares** Flashbacks Insomnia Generalized anxiety **Emotional Numbing** 



# The ACE Study

**Understanding Trauma** 

#### Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study

- Largest study of its kind ever done to examine the health and social effects of ACEs over lifespan(17,421 participants, 1995-97)
- Most were 50 or older (62%), white (77%) and college educated (72%)
- Outcomes assessed with National Death Index, hospital discharges, outpatient visits, pharmacy utilization, emergency room visits.

## What are ACEs?

- Childhood abuse and neglect
- Growing up with domestic violence
- Substance abuse in home
- Mental illness in home
- Loss of a parent
- Crime/incarceration

Two-thirds had at least one ACE

More than one-third had 2 or more ACEs

## ACEs and Chronic Disease

Strong, dose-response relationship between ACEs Score and . . .

- Smoking
- COPD
- Hepatitis
- Heart disease
- Fractures
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Alcoholism

- Substance abuse
- Depression
- Attempted suicide
- Teen pregnancy, including paternity
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Occupational health
- Job performance

# What is our Role?

## Care

- Listen to the stories of our patients about trauma and how it affects their complex lives
- Screen for trauma direct and indirect in the social history
- Educate our patients about what is normal in the aftermath of trauma
- Continue to remind ourselves of the connection between trauma and chronic disease

## Research

- Understand more about the connection between trauma and chronic disease
- Consider racism as a form of trauma that could account for health disparities
- Study the effects of adverse childhood experiences on inner city, African American men and women

## Advocacy

- Advocate for strong gun policy
- Advocate for access to effective, culturallycompetent care
- Violence as public health problem mediated by trauma and chronic disease
- Engagement of those affected by violence and trauma as providers, co-researchers

## HealthCREW



Training young men of color to be health educators

Nine month program, based in the Boston Public Health Commission

#### Goals:

Provide a career path in health for young men of color

Build a cadre of workers to address men's health issues