

Rapid video response – virtual response to domestic abuse calls for service versus face to face responses by police officers

Testing an optional and instant video response to eligible domestic abuse calls.

Key details

Status	Complete
Lead institution	University of Cambridge
Principal researcher(s)	Stacey Rothwell and Kent McFadzien of Kent Police stacey.rothwell@kent.police.uk
Police region	Eastern
Collaboration and partnership	Kent Police partnered with the Cambridge Centre for Evidence-Based Policing, supported by Home Office Science Technology and Analysis Research funding.
Level of research	Professional/work based
Project start date	February 2021
Date completed	June 2021

Hypothesis

Offering an immediate optional video conference call with a police constable improves service to victims of domestic abuse.

Geographical area

Kent.

Target sample size

517.

Participants - inclusion criteria

- Over 18 and is the victim (not a third party).
- Consent to a video response offering.
- Live call.
- Call graded domestic abuse and priority/appointment.
- Not previously part of the RCT.
- Suspect absent and offending ceased.
- Victim safe and able to communicate.

Interventions

A GoodSAM video link was immediately sent to the caller who was still on the line in the force control room, via text message or email.

Once received the victim would immediately connect with a waiting police officer who conducted the virtual first response via a recorded video call.

Study design

A block design was used. The blocks consisted of:

- female intimate partner violence (FIPV)
- male intimate partner violence (MIPV)
- female non-intimate violence (FNIPV)
- male non-intimate partner violence (MNIPV)

They were randomised in each group into treatment or control, so that they could be analysed as a group or individually.

There were enough cases to analyse the entire group (n=517) against the control group as well the FIPV group (357) separately, who made up 69% of the cohort.

Interim reports or publications

Rothwell S and others. [Rapid Video Responses \(RVR\) vs. Face-to-Face Responses by Police Officers to Domestic Abuse Victims: a Randomised Controlled Trial](#). Camb J Evid Based Polic 6, 1–24 (2022).

Outcome measures

- Effectiveness – victim satisfaction. This was determined using victim interviews conducted via telephone (80.5% response rate).
- Efficiency – victim delay/officer time. This was captured using the geo-location data from officers' personal radios and police vehicles.
- Outcomes – differences in arrest rates, lines of enquiry and crime reports between the two groups.

Summary of findings

- Increase in victim satisfaction (statistically significant) for female intimate victims of domestic abuse from 78 to 89%.
- Reduction in response delay for victims – reducing from 1,969 minutes (control) to three minutes (treatment) making rapid video responses 656 times faster than the traditional response.
- Improvement in (total) officer efficiency time – reducing from 205 minutes (control) to 122 minutes (treatment)
- Arrest rates were 50% higher for in the treatment group (24%) as opposed to the control group (16%).