

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Institute for the Prevention of In-Custody Death, Inc. (IPICD) funded and initiated this seminal research on the use, effectiveness, and safety of *The WRAP*, a full-body restraint system. It is part of the IPICD's ongoing efforts to provide the criminal justice community with updated and factual information relevant to effective operations and mission success.

The timely and safe restraint of an individual by law enforcement officers often necessitates a short-range relocation of a restrained person who may be in a combative and/or in an agitated state. These are extremely important concerns for officers in all government law enforcement agencies, and their employing governmental entities. If a seized person should die during or following restraint, the involved officers, their supervisors, and/or their employers may be subject to criminal prosecution and/or civil litigation. While the application of physical restraint techniques and/or restraint equipment on individuals is considered an acceptable standard of law enforcement practice, there are associated risks and potential legal (e.g., litigation), psychological (e.g., guilt), and ethical (e.g., community trust) problems.

Arrest-related or sudden, in-custody death during or following restraint is not a new phenomenon, but often creates crisis management and social issues. Governmental entities, criminal justice organizations, law enforcement officers, and other stakeholders have identified restraint-associated deaths as a major concern because of their financial and morale costs. Following the death of a restrained person there is often negative publicity that can affect the morale of the community, erode the trust of law enforcement agencies, and ultimately cost taxpayers through large jury awards, negotiated settlements, and/or defending lawsuits.

This seminal study retrospectively examined the use of *The WRAP* Restraint system (*The WRAP*) in a variety of police field (*clinical*) settings (n = 128) in 2 states during the period 2005-2009. A total of 4 police departments, 2 in California and 2 in Texas, voluntarily submitted use-of-force and/or incident reports to the IPICD that involved the use of *The WRAP* restraint on individuals. These reports were used to identify themes, develop research questions, and describe data on key variables. The research focused on answering questions related to whether *The WRAP* was efficacious in safely restraining individuals when applied, or if it adversely affected those restrained.

Purposes of Study

The purposes of this study were to identify several factors: was *The WRAP* safe and non-detrimental to individuals when it was applied in law enforcement field settings; what usage patterns were identifiable and measurable; what were the identifiable demographic characteristics of the individual restrained; what were the behavioral characteristics of the individual prior to being restrained in *The WRAP*; what force option(s) were used by the involved officers to restrain the individual; how many officers were present when *The WRAP* was applied; and where was the seized person taken after being placed into *The WRAP*?

Analyses of data from the use-of-force and incident reports surfaced themes and patterns. These enabled the investigators to craft 3 research questions:

1. What was the usage pattern of *The WRAP* in police field settings?
2. What force options were used by officers to capture, control, and restrain individuals?
3. Was *The WRAP* safe?

Descriptive statistics derived findings that were used to answer these questions.

Study Findings and Recommendations

Findings included, but were not limited to:

- Users reported *The WRAP* to be 100% effective,
- No deaths were associated with being restrained by *The WRAP*,
- No additional injuries were identified when applying *The WRAP*,
- A mode of 3 police officers was present when *The WRAP* was applied, and
- Avoidance of self-harm was the most frequent reason for applying *The WRAP*.

Based upon the study's findings, several *best practice* recommendations were made that focused upon organizational, training, force option, and report writing concerns. The information identified can be valuable to law enforcement agencies across the globe in determining whether they need to add *The WRAP* to their arsenal of restraint options; whether restraint policies, procedures, and rules need to be amended to include *The WRAP* as a preferred restraint option in specific situations; whether additional operational and/or training guidance is needed regarding officers writing complete reports describing the force options they used, including handcuffing; and, whether additional training is needed on *The WRAP* using the study's findings as a basis for the training.

Study Limitations

The analyses were limited to those police department administrators who voluntarily submitted usage data on *The WRAP*. The study was not experimental in design, but retrospective, using a mixed method design. Self-reporting and redaction of information were study limitations. The geographical location of *The WRAP* deployments was limited to two states, but the pattern of usage should be consistent with other agencies that use *The WRAP*. The study's parameters

did not include reviewing officer training records, agency lesson plans (e.g., *The WRAP*), *The WRAP competency*-based testing methods, organizational policies, procedures, or rules.

Funding

The study was funded by the Henderson, Nevada-based Institute for the Prevention of In-Custody Deaths, Inc. (IPICD), a firm that specializes in researching and training about arrest-related and sudden, in-custody deaths. Conditional to the conduct of the study, the names of the law enforcement agencies that supplied reports remain confidential.

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