

However, a lack of a significant reduction in police use of force was also found across studies that randomized by shift. A 2020 meta-analysis of existing BWC trials, including those that randomized by officer, shift, or other, found that “[t]he use of BWCs does not have consistent or significant effects on officers’ use of force....”¹ The authors noted, “Overall, there remains substantial uncertainty about whether BWCs can reduce officer use of force, but the variation in effects suggests there may be conditions in which BWC could be effective.”² In particular, they wrote that “restricting officer discretion in turning on and off BWCs may reduce police use of force, but more assessment is needed.”³

The largest multi-city study to date (referenced above), involving randomized controlled trials across ten sites in eight cities with randomization by shift, for a total of 2.2 million officer hours, also found no average change in use of force.⁴ The study noted, however, that the effects were not uniform: “the variability in our results also tells us that the BWVs worked *in some places, some of the time*, but did not work in others.”⁵ In this study as well in as some others, BWCs significantly exacerbated use of force in some cities. The authors hypothesized, “One direct explanation might be that BWVs escalate an already inflamed police–public encounter, which results in more rather than less force being used. It might be that when BWVs are introduced into some ongoing police–public interactions, the suspect, officer or both become more aggressive.”⁶

¹ Lum et al. (2020), p. 2.

² Lum et al. (2020), p. 1.

³ Lum et al. (2020), p. 2.

⁴ Ariel et al. (2016), p. 752 (emphasis in original).

⁵ Ariel et al. (2016), p. 752.

⁶ Ariel et al., (2016), p. 752.