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**Disentangling the Relationships among Prior Police Contact, Victim Cooperation, Investigatory Effort, and Case Clearance: Evidence from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) and Police Public Contact Survey (PPCS)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Objectives**

To assess (1) how victims' past-year police encounters are related to their reports of police investigatory effort, complaint signing, and case clearance and (2) how police and victim actions act in concert to account for case clearance.

### **Methods**

Processes are explored using the National Crime Victimization Survey and Police Public Contact Survey. Models are estimated using regression and structural equation modeling.

### **Findings**

Past-year police contact is unrelated to perceived investigatory effort. Victims with more encounters and whose most recent encounter was invasive are less likely to sign a complaint, and the number of contacts is negatively associated with clearance. Investigatory effort and complaint signing are related to clearance but do not account for the relationship between police interactions and case outcomes.

### **Conclusions**

There is no indication that victims with past-year police encounters perceive their cases are investigated less vigorously. Frequent and invasive past-year contacts are negatively related to complaint signing, but this action explains little of the relationship between police contact frequency and clearance. While additional work is needed to explore the cumulative and long-term effects of police-related experiences on case processing and outcomes, results point to the importance of enhancing cooperation among those with frequent and invasive police encounters.