

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

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March 25, 1998

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Phoenix, Arizona

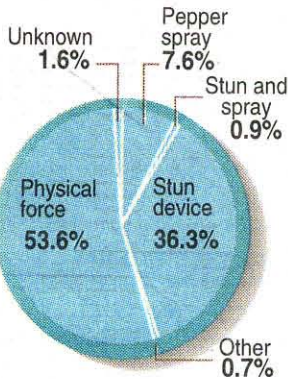
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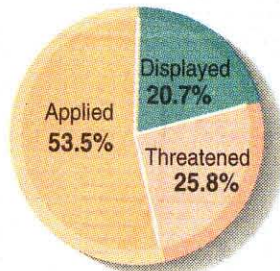
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USE OF FORCE IN MARICOPA COUNTY JAILS

Incidents by type of force used



How pepper spray was used



Source: Arizona State University School of Justice Studies

The Arizona Republic

A10 The Arizona Republic Wednesday

Jail injuries reduced

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excessive force and specifically condemned oleoresin capsicum, a pepper spray.

That earlier report, by correctional consultant George Sullivan, was a catapult for the U.S. attorney's civil-rights lawsuit filed against Arpaio and the county in October. Sullivan argued that pepper spray is potentially lethal and should be "strictly prohibited" except under rigid guidelines.

In contrast, Hepburn's team of ASU professors found that pepper spray is particularly helpful because

ONLINE: For excerpts from the report on use of non-lethal weapons, see this story on Arizona Central, www.azcentral.com on the Internet.

City, whereas stun guns are preferable in crowded booking areas and one-on-one altercations.

Their report says non-lethal weapons did not reduce the number of violent incidents in jail, but did cut down on the number of inmate grievances, as well as injuries.

The ASU study was commissioned after Sheriff Joe Arpaio agreed to the Justice Department study — arming virtually all detention officers with pepper spray and electric stun guns in 1994. Those weapons, acquired with funds from National Sheriff's Association, replaced manual methods of controlling prisoners.

"This probably has reduced our injuries — and the inmates' — by about 50 percent," said Deputy Chief Larry Wendt, who oversees the sheriff's custody operations.

Wendt said he and other jailers were hesitant to accept the new correctional method, which was unheard of just five years ago.

Due to the research in Maricopa County and several other jails, he predicted, "We are going to see, without a doubt, more and more facilities going to this."

Researchers emphasized that such a program can only succeed if guards are carefully trained and given clear policies to follow. Hepburn said his team devised a form that detention officers were obliged to complete whenever they deployed weapons or threatened to do so.

The report, completed late last year, was released after *The Arizona Republic* filed a public records request. It concludes that force is used or threatened "quite often" in the jails — about 1,500 times a year, including four violent episodes daily in the congested jail intake area.

Researchers found that stun guns and spray had become "an integral tool in the officers' response to altercations with inmates" in just two years. However, they cautioned that those weapons are inappropriate in about one-third of the incidents.

In fact, even after non-lethal weapons were introduced, more than half the use-of-force incidents reported by jailers were dealt with by hand. About one in three altercations was resolved with a stun gun; just 7 percent involved the use of pepper spray.

The ASU study is based largely on altercation forms and surveys completed by guards. Hepburn noted that findings were influenced by changes in jail policy and reporting. For instance, detention officers filed 25 percent fewer use-of-force forms after the Justice Department launched its civil rights investigation two years ago. Researchers speculated that the decrease occurred because guards used less force after Justice got involved, or stopped filing reports on all incidents, or a combination of both.

Dennis Wagner can be reached at 444-8874 or at dennis.wagner@pni.com via e-mail.

Study: Stun guns curb jail injuries

By Dennis Wagner
The Arizona Republic

The widespread use of stun guns and pepper spray in Maricopa County Jail has led to fewer injuries for guards and inmates, according to a study sponsored by the Justice Department.

John Hepburn, a professor with Arizona State University's School of Justice Studies, said two years of research indicate that violent incidents have been resolved more quickly and safely since detention

officers were armed with non-lethal weapons.

"When used appropriately, these devices are preferred to traditional hands-on strategies for controlling inmates," Hepburn said in an interview. "They're more effective, and produce fewer injuries."

The findings on pepper spray appear to contradict another probe sponsored by the Justice Department, which criticized the jail for

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