



Social cohesion and neighborhood safety in nine Chicago community areas

HEALTH SNAPSHOT NO.16

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The environment in which individuals live impacts their overall health and well-being. Thus, it is important to consider aspects of one's neighborhood, such as social cohesion and safety, in addition to individual-level factors when studying mental and physical health outcomes. Social cohesion is the degree to which members of a group cooperate in order to meet their collective needs.¹ It has been associated with mental health outcomes, as well as health behaviors such as smoking and walking.² Perceived neighborhood safety has also been linked to health outcomes, with fear of one's environment leading to poorer mental health, physical functioning, and overall quality of life.³ This health snapshot presents social cohesion and neighborhood safety findings from the *Sinai Community Health Survey 2.0*, a community-driven, representative survey of nine communities in Chicago.

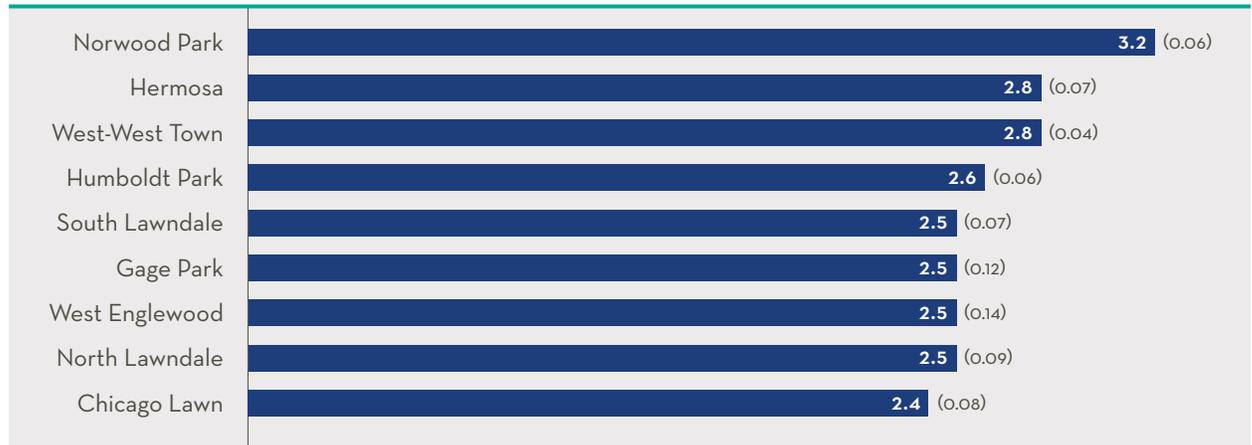
WHICH COMMUNITIES ARE MOST AFFECTED?

- Among the nine communities surveyed, Norwood Park had the highest average social cohesion score (3.2 out of 4.0).
- In Gage Park, 40% of females felt unsafe being out alone in their neighborhood during the day and 69% felt unsafe alone at night.
- The majority of adults in South Lawndale (58% of males and 71% of females) felt unsafe being out alone in their neighborhood at night.

WHO IS MOST AFFECTED?

- About one in four non-Hispanic Black females and females of Puerto Rican origin felt unsafe being out alone in their neighborhood during the day.
- About half of non-Hispanic Black females and females of Puerto Rican or Mexican origin felt unsafe being out alone in their neighborhood at night.

FIGURE 1: Average social cohesion score (out of 4.0) by community area

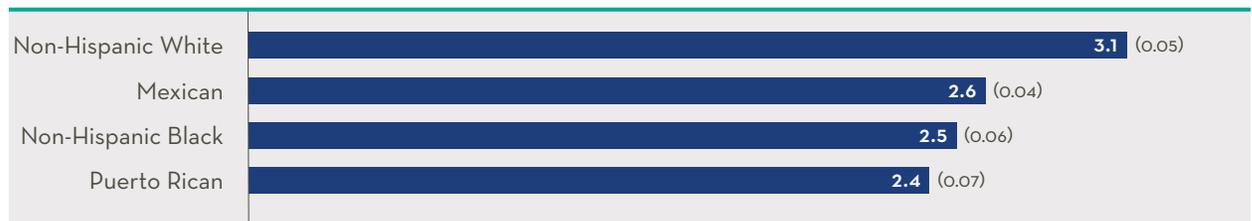


Sampled West Town community area west of Western Avenue only
 No national comparison data available

AVERAGE (STANDARD ERROR)

- In the nine communities surveyed, the average social cohesion score ranged from a high of 3.2 in Norwood Park to a low of 2.4 in Chicago Lawn.
- Eight of the nine surveyed communities had an average social cohesion score that was less than 3.0.

FIGURE 2: Average social cohesion score (out of 4.0) by race/ethnicity

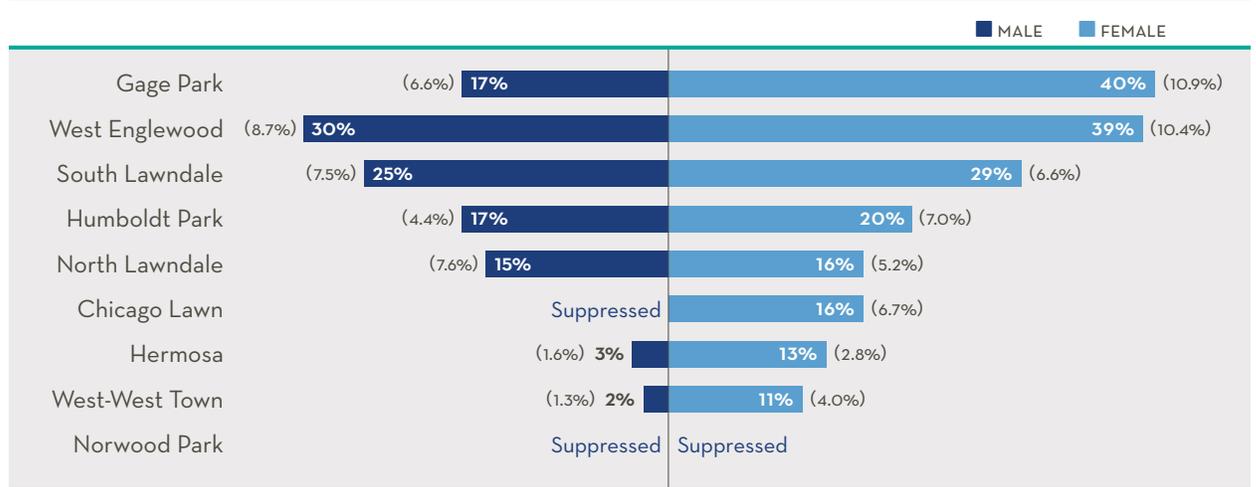


No national comparison data available
 Adjusted Wald Test p-value < 0.0001

AVERAGE (STANDARD ERROR)

- There was a statistically significant difference in the average social cohesion score by race/ethnic group, which was highest for non-Hispanic White adults (3.1) and lowest for adults of Puerto Rican origin (2.4).

FIGURE 3: Percent who felt unsafe alone in neighborhood during daytime by community area and sex

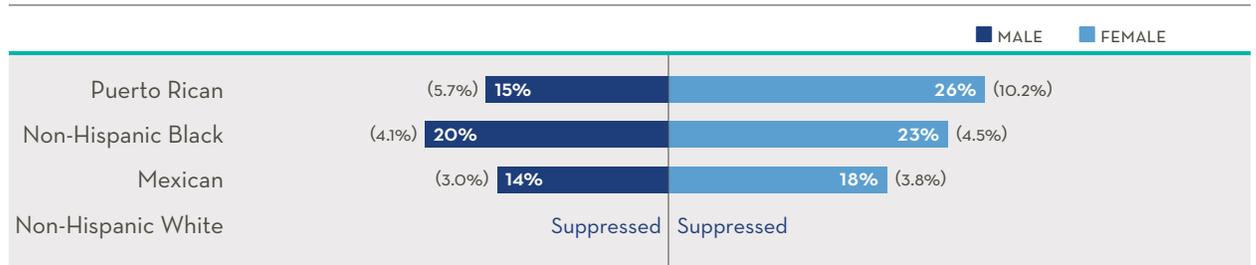


Sampled West Town community area west of Western Avenue only
No national comparison data available

PREVALENCE (STANDARD ERROR)

- The percentage of females who felt unsafe being out alone in their neighborhood during the day ranged from a high of 40% for females in Gage Park to a low of 11% for females in west-West Town.
- The percentage of males who felt unsafe being out alone in their neighborhood during the day ranged from a high of 30% for males in West Englewood to a low of 2% for males in west-West Town.

FIGURE 4: Percent who felt unsafe alone in neighborhood during daytime by race/ethnicity and sex

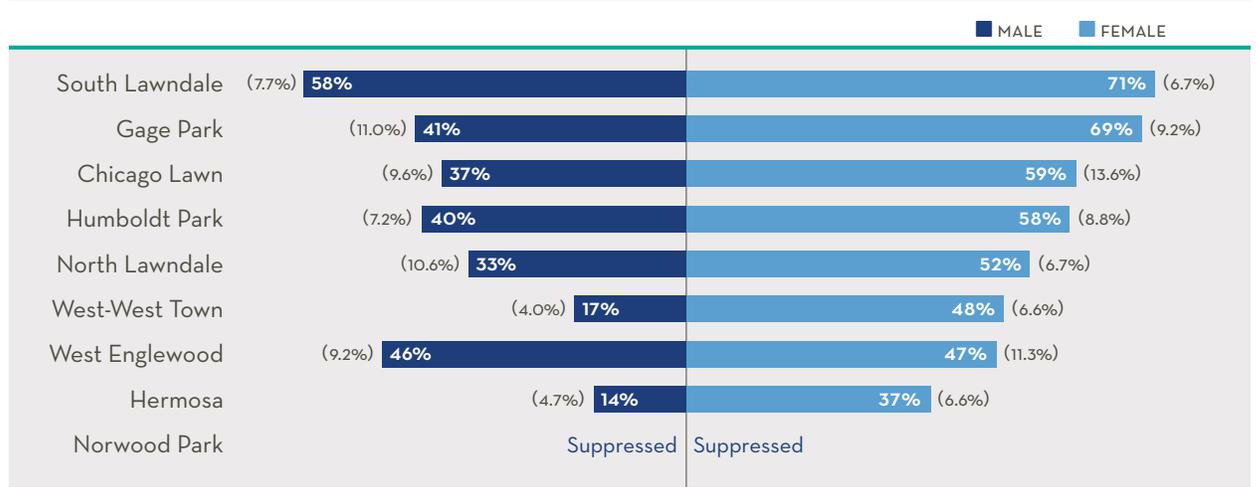


No national comparison data available
Rao-Scott Chi-Square p-value = 0.0034 (males); p = 0.0138 (females)

PREVALENCE (STANDARD ERROR)

- There was a statistically significant difference in the percentage of females who felt unsafe being out alone in their neighborhood during the day by race/ethnic group, which was highest for females of Puerto Rican origin (26%) and lowest for females of Mexican origin (18%).
- There was also a statistically significant difference in the percentage of males who felt unsafe being out alone in their neighborhood during the day by race/ethnic group, which was highest for non-Hispanic Black males (20%) and lowest for males of Mexican origin (14%).

FIGURE 5: Percent who felt unsafe alone in neighborhood at night by community area and sex

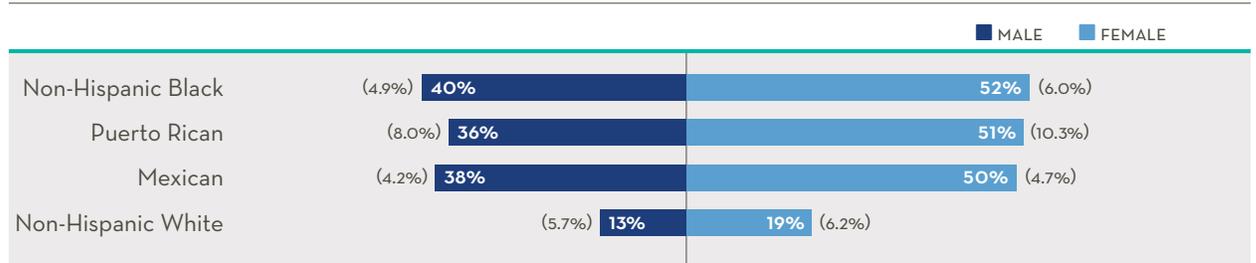


Sampled West Town community area west of Western Avenue only
No national comparison data available

PREVALENCE (STANDARD ERROR)

- The percentage of females who felt unsafe being out alone in their neighborhood at night ranged from a high of 71% for females in South Lawndale to a low of 37% for females in Hermosa.
- The percentage of males who felt unsafe being out alone in their neighborhood at night ranged from a high of 58% for males in South Lawndale to a low of 14% for males in Hermosa.

FIGURE 6: Percent who felt unsafe alone in neighborhood at night by race/ethnicity and sex



No national comparison data available
Rao-Scott Chi-Square p-value = 0.0126 (males); p = 0.0031 (females)

PREVALENCE (STANDARD ERROR)

- There was a statistically significant difference in the percentage of females who felt unsafe being out alone in their neighborhood at night by race/ethnic group, which was highest for non-Hispanic Black females (52%) and lowest for non-Hispanic White females (19%).
- There was also a statistically significant difference in the percentage of males who felt unsafe being out alone in their neighborhood at night by race/ethnic group, which was highest for non-Hispanic Black males (40%) and lowest for non-Hispanic White males (13%).

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Sinai Urban Health Institute (SUHI) is a unique, nationally-recognized research center on the west side of Chicago. Our mission is to achieve health equity among communities through excellence and innovation in data-driven research, interventions, evaluation, and collaboration. SUHI is a proud member of Sinai Health System. For more information about SUHI, visit www.SUHChicago.org.

SUHI designed and conducted the *Sinai Community Health Survey 2.0* in partnership with our Community Advisory Committee and The University of Illinois at Chicago Survey Research Laboratory (SRL). SRL administered surveys face-to-face in both English and Spanish to randomly selected households from each of the nine surveyed communities. Interviewers randomly selected up to two adults (18 and over) per household. Data collection took place between March 2015 and September 2016 with a final sample size of 1,543 adults. Survey results are representative at the community area level for all communities with the exception of West Town, which was sampled west of Western Avenue only. More information about the survey is available at www.SinaiSurvey.org.

DEFINITIONS

Social cohesion score was the average of individual scores from the five-item Social Cohesion Scale,^{4,5} with four-point response options. Higher values signified higher social cohesion and control. If one scale item was missing, the mean of the four answered items was used to calculate a score. A score was not calculated for respondents with two or more missing scale items.

Feeling unsafe alone in neighborhood during daytime was defined as responding ‘a little’ when asked whether you feel safe being out alone in your neighborhood during the daytime a lot, some, or a little.

Feeling unsafe alone in neighborhood at night was defined as responding ‘a little’ when asked whether you feel safe being out alone in your neighborhood at night a lot, some, or a little.

METHODS

We used sampling weights to compute statistical estimates to ensure (1) the estimates accounted for the differential probability of the selection of respondents; and (2) the demographic profile of survey respondents matched the community area demographic profiles from the 2010-2014 *American Community Survey*. The Rao-Scott Chi-Square test and Adjusted Wald Test were used to test for statistical differences by race/ethnic group overall or by sex, as appropriate. Findings were suppressed when the number of observations was less than five.

REFERENCES

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4. Morenoff JD, Sampson RJ, Raudenbush S. Neighborhood inequality, collective efficacy, and the spatial dynamics of urban violence. *Criminology.* 2001; 39: 517-558.
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