



Physicians for
Human Rights

“Excited Delirium” and Deaths in Police Custody: The Deadly Impact of a Baseless Diagnosis



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Current Context





Contributors



The Miami Herald

APRIL 26, 1990

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"For some reason, the male of the species becomes psychotic and the female of the species dies in relation to sex," while using cocaine, Wetli said.

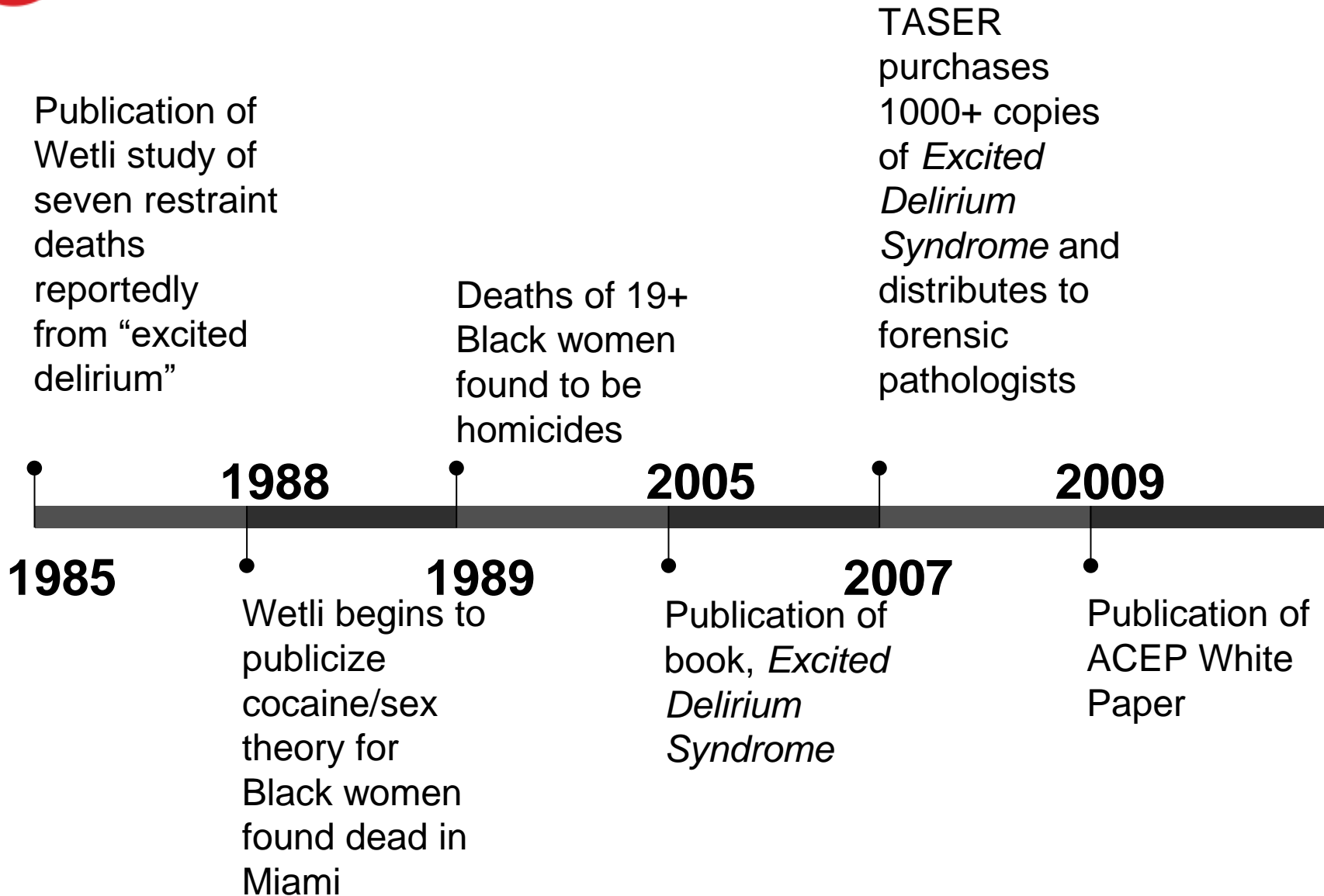
While he acknowledged that "at first glance" each victim "looks like she's been raped and murdered," he said autopsies "have conclusively showed that these women were not murdered."

IN HEALTH MAY/JUNE 1990

And its fickleness. "Seventy percent of people dying of coke-induced delirium are black males, even though most users are white," says deputy chief medical examiner Charles Wetli. "Why? It may be genetic, but there's a lot we don't know about how cocaine affects different individuals." Wetli, the department's drug

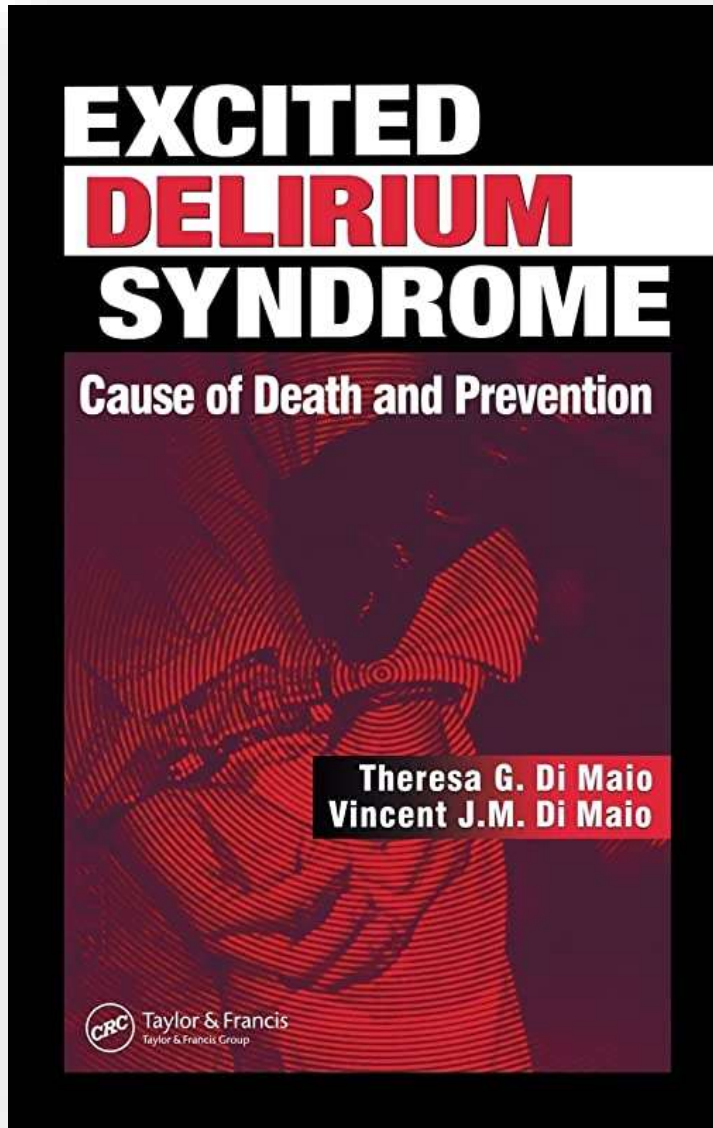


Timeline: Origins of “Excited Delirium”



PHR

“Excited Delirium” Syndrome and TASER



DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all law enforcement and medical personnel who have been wrongfully accused of misconduct in deaths due to excited delirium syndrome.



Findings and Conclusions

The term "excited delirium" cannot be disentangled from its racist and unscientific history.

- ❖ **Medical literature of poor quality**
- ❖ **Conflicts of interest (TASER, defense)**
- ❖ **No consensus on definition**
- ❖ **Disproportionately applied to Black men and relies on racist tropes**

"Excited delirium" is not a valid, independent medical or psychiatric diagnosis and should not be used as a cause of death.



Policy Changes





Ongoing Advocacy

- Medical associations
- Law enforcement
- Legal stakeholders
- Public education & media
 - Website with Campaign Zero:
endexciteddelirium.org
 - Conferences
- Legislative advocacy