



Stress and PTSD among police officers: risks, myths and prevention

LEPH 2016

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Lessons from the past: Piper Alpha disaster



Juli 6, 1988

167 employees died

British Journal of Psychiatry (1991), 159, 547-555

Reactions of Police Officers to Body-Handling after a Major Disaster A Before-and-After Comparison

DAVID A. ALEXANDER and ANDREW WELLS

This study reports the results of an unusual opportunity to follow up a group of police officers who were involved in body-handling duties following the Piper Alpha disaster, and for whom there were available data from pre-disaster assessments. In addition, after these duties, the officers were compared with a matched control group of officers who had not been involved in such work. The comparisons failed to demonstrate high levels of post-traumatic distress or psychiatric morbidity. The results are interpreted in terms of issues such as the officers' own coping strategies, and major organisational and managerial factors.

Recent reports (e.g. Shepherd & Hodgkinson, 1990) claim that the notion of 'victim' is rarely used in relation to rescue, medical and support workers after disasters. There have, however, been a few studies

module of the platform, which lay in over 120 m of water. It took several months to retrieve this enormous structure from the sea bed and to have it towed to the remote island of Flotta in the Orkney



Psychiatry Research 198 (2012) 100–105



Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Psychiatry Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/psychres



Mental health problems among search and rescue workers deployed in the Haïti earthquake 2010: A pre–post comparison

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Rank	Physical health	Psychological well-being	Job satisfaction
1	<i>Ambulance</i>	<i>Social services providing care</i>	<i>Prison officer</i>
2	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Ambulance</i>
3	<i>Social services providing care</i>	<i>Fire brigade</i>	<i>Police</i>
4	<i>Customer services – call centre</i>	<i>Ambulance</i>	<i>Customer services – call centre</i>
5	<i>Bar staff</i>	<i>Vets</i>	<i>Social services providing care</i>
6	<i>Prison officer</i>	<i>Lecturers</i>	<i>Teachers</i>
7	<i>Mgmt (private sector)</i>	<i>Clerical and admin</i>	<i>Nursing</i>
8	<i>Clerical and admin</i>	<i>Mgmt (private sector)</i>	<i>Medical/dental</i>
9	<i>Police</i>	<i>Prison officer</i>	<i>Allied health professionals</i>
10	Teaching assistant	<i>Research – academic</i>	Bar staff
11	Head teachers	<i>Police</i>	Mgmt (private sector)
12	Secretarial/business support	<i>Customer services – call centre</i>	Fire brigade
13	Research – academic	Director (public sector)	Vets
14	Lecturers	Allied health professionals	Clerical and admin
15	Senior police	Bar staff	Mgmt (public sector)
16	Nursing	Nursing	Lecturers
17	Mgmt (public sector)	Medical/dental	Head teachers
18	Allied health professionals	Senior police	Teaching assistant
19	Medical/dental	Secretarial/business support	Secretarial/business support
20	Accountant	Head teachers	Director (public sector)
21	Fire brigade	Mgmt (public sector)	Research – academic
22	Vets	Accountant	Senior police
23	Director (public sector)	Teaching assistant	School lunchtime supervisors
24	Analyst	Analyst	Accountant
25	School lunchtime supervisors	School lunchtime supervisors	Analyst
26	Director/MD (private sector)	Director/MD (private sector)	Director/MD (private sector)

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Police officers: a high-risk group for the development of mental health disturbances? A cohort study

Peter G van der Velden,^{1,2,3} Arthur R Rademaker,⁴ Eric Vermetten,⁴ Marie-Anne Portengen,⁵ Joris C Yzermans,⁶ Linda Grievink⁷

	Depressive symptoms	
	mild-severe	severe
Firefighters (2012)	2,2	0,0
Police (2004)	5,2	1,2
Police (2013 MK)	5,9	0,8
Soldiers before deployment (2005-2007)	7,2	0,4
Soldiers after deployment (2005-2007)	7,6	0,8
Police (2013 cont)	10,8	2,2
Police (2002)	11,8	1,4
Bank employees (1991)	12,0	2,7
Firefighters (2002)	13,0	1,6
Employees Psychiatric hospital (1996)	16,4	5,9
Victims bank robbery (1991)	20,9	8,8
Bank employees (1991)	22,4	5,3
Participants Stress Management Training (1998)	36,2	9,7

PTSD: The Hidden Toll of Policing

Witnessing death, violence, and the suffering of innocents on a daily basis can leave police officers feeling overwhelmed and desperate

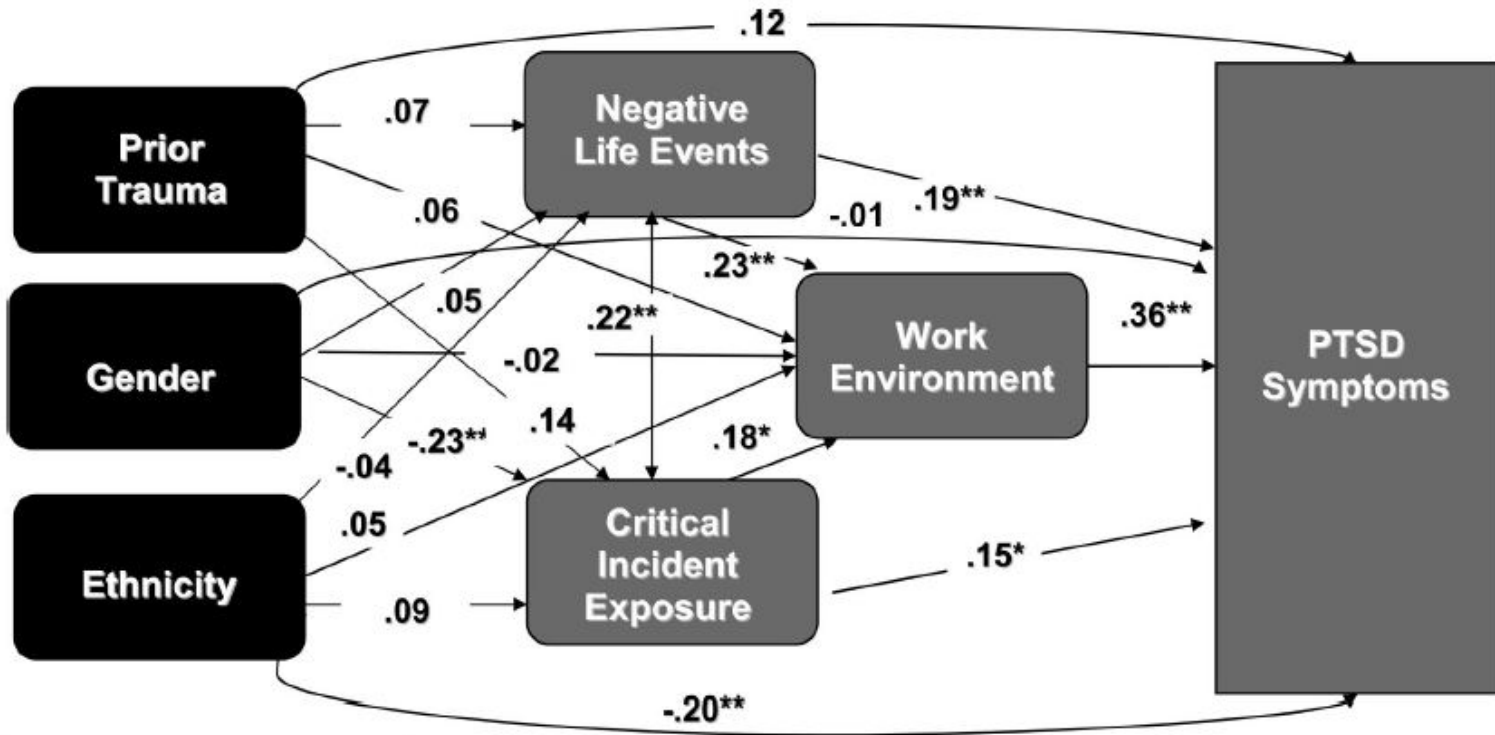
By [Denisse Moreno](#), Epoch Times   July 22, 2016 AT 7:00 AM Last Updated: July 25, 2016 1:11 pm




Police Studies on PTSD in Spanish-Speaking Nations: A Systematic Review

Ileen C. Verbeek and Peter G. van der Velden
Tilburg University

Police officers are frequently confronted with many kinds of potentially traumatic events. Empirical studies suggest that the prevalence of PTSD among officers normally varies between 0% and approximately 9% (Berger et al., 2012). However, current knowledge is predominantly based on studies published in English peer-reviewed journals, and the large majority is conducted in countries where English is the native language. Although Spanish is the second native language in the world, these “English” studies and reviews of studies hardly refer, focus, or include studies from the so-called Hispanosphere. Therefore, it is unknown whether these studies, if they exist, add new insights in the



 Assessed during Academy Training
 Assessed at 12 Months Active Service

Positive and Negative Emotion Prospectively Predict Trajectories of Resilience and Distress Among High-Exposure Police Officers

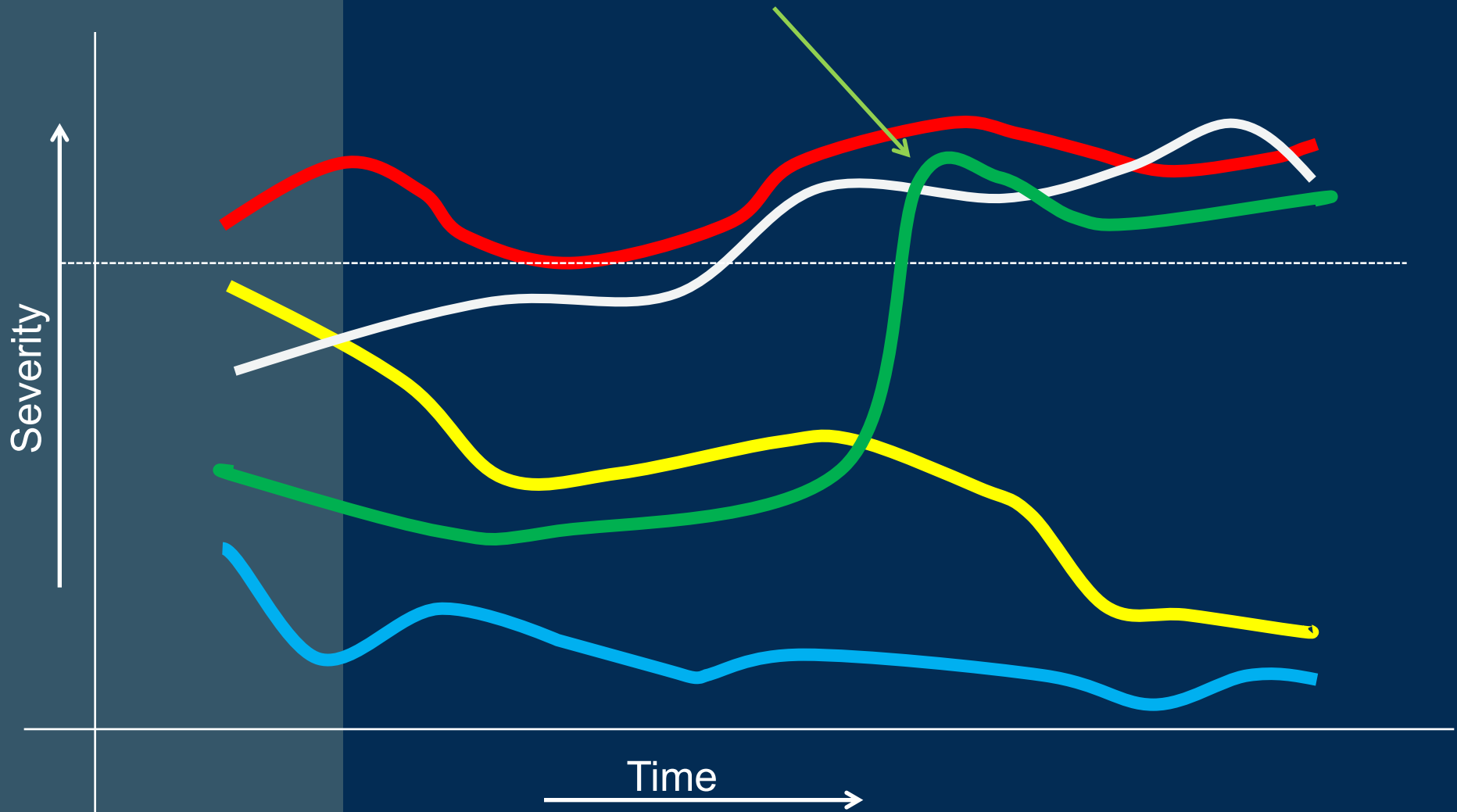
Isaac R. Galatzer-Levy, Adam D. Brown,
and Clare Henn-Haase
New York University School of Medicine

Thomas J. Metzler and Thomas C. Neylan
San Francisco Veterans Affairs, San Francisco and University of
California San Francisco

Charles R. Marmar
New York University School of Medicine



Different colours: different trajectories



Next, we found that the number of exposures to PTEs and reported levels of work stress did not differentiate classes. This finding is intriguing considering relatively consistent evidence for a “dose–response” relationship between levels of repeated exposure and aversive outcomes such as PTSD (Johnson & Thompson,

Lessons for prevention

- A very small minority of officers suffer from mental health problems
- **A critical selection process of recruits is an important preventive measure**
- Mental health problems are hardly explained by critical incidents (apart from individual cases)
- **“Normal” organizational stressors are important risk factors for mental health problems among officers**
- Private life-events may influence the mental health of officers
- **Social support is essential (recognition, reward, help), but you don't need psychologists to provide it.**
- **Don't under-estimate the resilience of officers**

NEVER
STOP WONDERING
& ASKING
QUESTIONS

Thank you!