

ABSTRACT

A Study of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Among Jamaica Constabulary Force Personnel In A Given Geographical Area In Jamaica.

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The aim was to study Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among a total of 134 police officers in eight randomly selected police stations in volatile and non-volatile communities of the Kingston and St. Andrew corporate areas between November 2000 and January 2001, using the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV Axis I Disorders (Research Version) non-patient edition, revised 8/98 (SCID-I/NP), Version 2.0, and a questionnaire developed by the author.

Of 134 officers, there were 120 males (89.6%), 14 females (10.4%), of an over all mean age and service of 38.59 ± 11 years and 13.49 ± 10 years. Corporal and below ranks represented 92.8%. 37.3% married and 29.1% had common-law union. 67.2% had completed secondary school. 61.9% were assigned to the stations considered to be in moderate to highly volatile areas. 12.6% reported injuries by gunshots, 32.09% received injuries in motor vehicle accidents.

No officers satisfied SCID-I, DSM-IV criteria for full PTSD. Overall prevalence of partial PTSD was 20.9%(28/134). The common demographic and environmental characteristics of officers with partial PTSD to reach statistical significance were identified. These were younger age ($\chi^2=10.215$, $p=0.016$), shorter service ($\chi^2=11.235$, $p=0.021$), poor community support ($\chi^2=10.138$, $p=0.017$), presence of psychosocial and environmental stressors ($\chi^2=17.631$, $p=0.001$), low GAF scores ($\chi^2=49.75$, $p=0.000$), assignment to stations in volatile areas of Kingston and St. Andrew ($\chi^2=24.11$, $p=0.001$).

Officers with partial PTSD were more prone to physical illness ($\chi^2=8.287, p=0.004$) and had increased days of absence from work ($\chi^2=11.221, p=0.024$).

The risk factors of PTSD such as gender, marital status, level of education, past history of physical and sexual abuse, family history of psychiatric illness, frequency of exposures to traumatic stress and nature of intervention to traumatic stress were not significant in this studied sample.

Several factors responsible for the bi-directional interpretation of no PTSD versus partial PTSD were identified and some of those were postulated as factors that could be used to select the most resilient officers for the Jamaica Constabulary Force in the future and called for more recognition of traumatic stress, mental health promotion and, for timely establishment of the comprehensive services and further research.