

VULNERABILITY FACTORS THAT LEAD
TO HIGH LEVELS OF STRESS AMONG
CORRECTIONS OFFICERS

By

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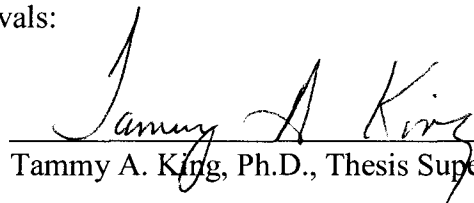
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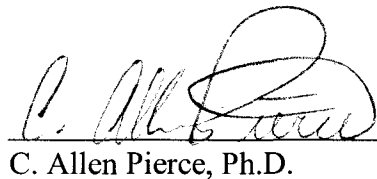
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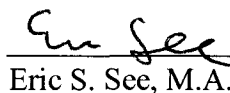
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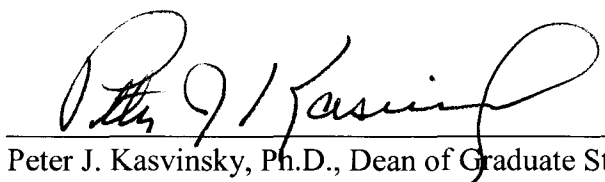
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ABSTRACT

This research examines the effects of stress on Corrections Officers and more specifically factors that make them vulnerable to stress. This study reviews previous research on this topic and is accompanied by an individual study in which Corrections Officers at Grafton Correctional Institution (State of Ohio facility located in Grafton) were the participants. A total of 128 surveys were distributed to Officers. Miller and Smith Psychologists at Boston University Medical Center designed the survey; it is used to determine if an individual is vulnerable to stress. This survey, together with demographic information such as age, gender, shift, social support, and years of service were examined to determine which Officers are more vulnerable to stress.

It was found that approximately 51.7 percent of the respondents were vulnerable to stress. For the most part age, gender, years of service, marital status and relationship with supervisors did not influence an Officer's vulnerability to stress. Of all the demographic information examined, it appears that personality type is the most significant. Surprisingly, it was found that those Officers with Type B (laid back) personalities are more vulnerable to stress than those with Type A (assertive) personalities. In addition to the survey instrument and demographic information, Officers were asked the open-ended question: "What is your strongest source of stress?" The most common answers to this question were "other staff" and "supervisors". This answer is consistent with prior research on the topic of stress among Corrections Officers

Each of the twenty survey questions was analyzed to determine which factors are common among Officers in contributing to a higher vulnerability score. The most significant factors attributing to stress pertained to the Officers lifestyle choices and

activities outside of work. Many of the Officers indicated that they have a poor diet, smoke, and do not participate in social activities. All of these factors are significant influences on whether or not an individual is vulnerable to stress.

This study is valuable because it identifies the factors that make many Corrections Officers more vulnerable to stress than members of the general public. This study may be used in future research studies by students, or Ohio's Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to develop an effective stress management program, or implement policies to reduce this serious problem.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Every day newspapers and television news programs report murders, rapes, and other crimes that occur in cities, states, and our nation. Once these lawbreakers are caught and sentenced in court they are usually forgotten. The public feels that justice is served once these individuals are removed from society and placed in a correctional institution.

There is one group of individuals that must deal with these violent offenders on a daily basis. Corrections Officers have the responsibility of protecting society from these individuals by maintaining order in the prison environment and preventing escapes. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (2000) lists the following duties for Corrections Officers:

Supervise inmates of all nationalities and cultures, assigned to daily activities. Make periodic rounds in assigned areas to ensure orderly movement, security and control of inmates. Enforce institution policies and departmental rules, policies and procedures. Make checks in assigned areas to detect contraband articles. Safeguard and protect state property and stress economic use of equipment and supplies, food, clothing, utilities, etc. Prepare forms and reports as required. Assist in providing a safe, secure environment through utilization of modern safety practices and security procedures (1).

After reading these duties, it is clear to see that Corrections Officers must adopt a variety of roles depending on the situation or job assignment they are given. "As a people worker, the officer must cope with the human problems of inmates on a personal level. But the officer also functions as a member of a complex organization and is thus

expected to treat clients impersonally and to follow formally prescribed procedures” (Clear and Cole, 1997, 347).

Prisons are traditionally bureaucratic in nature. They follow formal procedures, a clear chain of command, and well structured communication channels. This management approach has been used because prisons have been viewed as dangerous organizations where individuals could not be trusted to make decisions on their own (Wright, 1997, 526).

Many Officers are unable to cope with the problems they encounter as they work in a prison. This is often due to the management style, their variety of roles, shift work, as well as individual factors. This inability to cope often leads to stress and burnout. When Correctional Workers are undergoing a great deal of stress and do not manage it effectively, they may behave in ways that impact both their personal and professional lives negatively. In fact, Corrections Officers have more than double the national average for divorce. The health ramifications of stress are even more disturbing. Officers have high heart attack rates, ulcers, and typically more tension headaches and other stress related illnesses than members of the general population do. The result of these stress-related illnesses is a shortened life span. Sadly, studies have shown that the average life expectancy of a Correctional Officer is approximately 59 years (Moracco, 1985, 22).

Alvarez and Stanley conducted one of the earliest studies on Correctional Officer stress in 1930 as cited in Corrections Today, 1985. The study compared the stress levels of officers with inmates in the New York Department of Corrections. Surprisingly, it was found that the Correctional Officers had significantly higher blood pressure levels than

the inmates. The problem of stress among Correctional Officers in the New York Department of Corrections has resulted in a number of individuals being off on disability leave (Honald, 1985, 46).

The word stress is derived from the Latin word *strictus*, which means, “to tighten” (Jex, 1998, 2). It is a difficult concept to define in just one way. Some researchers define stress using a stimulus definition. “A stimulus definition implies that stress refers to those stimuli in the environment that may require some adaptive response on the part of an employee” (Jex, 1998, 2). A response definition refers to the way an individual “feels” when they are unable to positively cope with the demands of a job. The final definition of stress combines the previous two together. “A stimulus-response definition implies that stress refers to the overall process by which job demands impact employees” (Jex, 1998, 2).

The Federal Bureau of Prison’s (1996) training manual identifies three types of stress that correctional workers may experience. The first is short-term stress. This type of stress is not always negative. “Short-term stress perks you up and prepares you to deal with any kind of emergency” (5). During short-term stress the body gets ready to deal with the situation at hand. The body’s reaction to this stress is called the fight or flight response. At the conclusion of the emergency the body returns to its normal state which is a positive and healthy reaction to stress (5).

The second and most harmful type of stress is chronic or long-term stress. Long-term stress occurs when individuals are constantly under stress, and their body is unable to return to a relaxed state. If a person is unable to cope effectively with long-term stress they may experience burnout (Federal Bureau of Prisons Training Manual, 1996, 5).

Matteson and Ivancevich (1987) state that burnout is a process that occurs in five stages over an extended period of time. These stages include: Involvement, Stagnation, Detachment, Juncture, and Intervention (243). Involvement is the first stage of burnout. Individuals in the Involvement stage are usually just beginning a new job. They are most likely experiencing a great deal of excitement and are quite satisfied with their work. As long as individuals remain satisfied, and their expectations of the job are met, they may never experience burnout. "If the individual's expectations are not realistic, however, burnout may be under way" (243).

The second stage of burnout is Stagnation. Stagnation occurs as an individual slowly becomes dissatisfied with their job. During this stage an individual's production may slow down and their preoccupation with outside interests becomes more important than completing their work (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987, 243).

Detachment is the third stage. It occurs when individuals realize that they may be experiencing burnout. Individuals in this stage generally do not look to advance in the organization. "Individuals at this stage may be chronically exhausted, ill, depressed, and angry" (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987, 243).

The fourth and most harmful stage of burnout is Juncture. During the Juncture stage an individual begins to experience mental and physical symptoms. They often become extremely depressed and may not be able to function on or off the job. Because of the depression, and other mental symptoms, individuals may even consider committing suicide as a way of escaping problems at work (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987, 243)

The final stage of burnout is Intervention. Individuals in this stage attempt to alleviate the problem of burnout in a positive manner. They may change jobs, transfer to

a different department, or quit and find work in a different field. “Intervention may also take place if the individuals stay on the job; they may modify job responsibilities or relationships with other organizational members and/or clients” (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987, 243).

As discussed earlier, short-term stress and long-term stress can be experienced by Corrections Officers. There is always the potential for officers to be exposed to critical incident stress. This may occur if an officer is exposed to a violent assault, hostage situation or a riot. “Immediately after a critical incident, workers are likely to experience significant withdrawal. They may re-experience the event through flashbacks and nightmares and may suffer anxiety, guilt, and have difficulty returning to work” (Federal Bureau of Prisons Training Manual, 1996, 6).

Prison administrators have often overlooked this important problem even though high stress levels often result in high turnover rates, poor work performances, and health problems resulting in employee absences. This research focuses on the problem of stress for Corrections Officers, as well as the way individuals and prison administrators can more effectively manage the problem.

Problem Statement

Job stress is a significant problem for Corrections Officers. Serious physical and mental health problems are likely to occur if officers do not learn to cope in positive ways. Stress not only impacts the health of the individual officers, but also affects the health of the organization and presents a number of management concerns. Examples include high turnover rates, accidents, increased workers compensation claims, and employee grievances.

Need Statement

Research on this topic is necessary to determine the magnitude of stress and to identify the causes of stress for Corrections Officers as well as developing positive ways for individuals and prison administrators to deal with this problem.

Summary

In this chapter, stress was defined, as well as the problems that may occur when Correctional Officers do not learn to cope with stress effectively. In the following chapter, a literature review, which examines the causes of stress among Correctional Officers and its impact on an individual's health as well as the health of a Correctional Institution, is presented. Chapter three presents the methodology that was used to examine the problem of stress among correctional officers at an Ohio correctional facility. Data were collected using the Miller and Smith's stress test. Correctional Officers were given the test and then the data were analyzed. In chapter four the results are presented and in chapter five a discussion concerning the results is presented. In chapter five the limitations to the research project and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In Chapter one, the negative impact that stress can have on a person was presented. Correctional Officers work in environments where stress is prevalent. The purpose for this literature review and this study is to determine the magnitude of stress in the lives of Correctional Officers and to evaluate the causes of that stress. The studies that are reviewed in this chapter explore all aspects of stress.

“Models” of Stress Research

Researchers have developed several “models” to study occupational stress. French and Kahn (1962), at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, developed a model that examines an individual’s objective environment and psychological environment. This model examines all the factors in an individual’s environment that may cause stress, as well as the individual’s response to that stress. The body’s physical reaction to stress may include such things as an increase in blood pressure, heart rate, and in some cases skin hives. A person may also exhibit such behavioral responses as angry outbursts, depression, and sleep problems. In addition to behavioral and physical responses to stress, the Institute for Social Research Model also examines individual characteristics such as personality traits, genetic makeup, and interpersonal relationships with others (Jex, 1998, 5).

McGrath (1976) developed the second stress model. It explains organizational stress in four stages. The first stage is similar to the Institute for Social Research’s model; the situations an individual may be exposed to are examined. The second stage

looks at the individual's perception of these situations. Thirdly, the individual must choose a response to the situation, and in the final stage they engage in behavior to deal with that situation. For example, if an employee perceives their work environment to be unsafe they may react by not working as diligently. This poor job performance ultimately effects the overall operation of the organization (Jex, 1998, 5).

A third model of occupational stress was developed by Karasek (1979) and is called the demand-control model. This model explains occupational stress as the result of employees having too many demands placed on them, and having little control over their work environment. "A good example of this might be an employee on a factory assembly line. Such an individual may have very demanding production quotas to meet but, at the same time, have very little control over such things as the work pace of others and the reliability of machinery" (Jex, 1998, 7).

The final model of occupational stress to be discussed is called the Person-Environment fit model. This model was derived by a social psychologist named Kurt Lewin. "Lewin's notion was simply that behavior is a function of the interaction between the person and the situation" (Jex, 1998, 7). As an example, Corrections Officers may view their family as their most important value. The institution may require officers to work overtime and rotating shifts which leads to time away from family. The officer does not value work as importantly as family and a significant amount of stress may result.

Causes of Correctional Officer Stress

There are many sources of stress that employees may experience in today's work place. These sources of stress, or stressors, are "demands made by the internal or

external environment that upsets a person's balance and for which restoration is needed" (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987, 33). Many of these stressors are discussed in the book Controlling Work Stress (1987) by Matteson and Ivancevich.

Blue-collar workers typically experience physical environment stressors. Such things as extreme temperatures, or too much or too little light are examples of physical environment stressors. Corrections Officers work in physical environments that can lead to high stress levels. They often work in overcrowded institutions and are exposed to fights and assaults on a daily basis. "When these violent events occur, they increase feelings of lack of control and helplessness among employees. Lack of control over danger in one's environment is a significant environmental stressor" (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987, 35).

Shift Work:

Prisons do not close and Corrections Officers must work a variety of shifts during their career. Shift work is a significant stressor for officers. Working the "graveyard" shift is difficult mentally and physically for many individuals. The body's internal clock becomes disoriented when there is a change in the normal sleeping pattern. In addition, individuals working this shift do not eat at regular times. These changes often result in physiological problems. (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987, 147).

Role Ambiguity and Conflicts:

Another stressor that Corrections Officers may experience is Role Ambiguity. "Role Ambiguity is a lack of clarity about the job objectives and the scope of responsibilities of one's job" (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987, 44). This is best illustrated by thinking of an individual who is just beginning a new job. They are usually

unsure of their job duties and what the proper procedures are for performing their job effectively. As they “learn the ropes” they become more familiar with their job duties, and become more comfortable at work. Temporary Role Ambiguity generally does not result in an increase in stress, and workers are usually able to cope with it well. In 1964, studies by Kahn and colleagues illustrated that workers who experience role ambiguity over a long period of time are less satisfied with their jobs, and are less self-confident than workers who do not experience Role Ambiguity.

Chronic Ambiguity can occur if an individual is working in an environment where they are frequently unclear about their job. Correction Officers may experience Chronic Ambiguity because they deal with a variety of situations during an average workweek. Officers may work in a housing unit with hundreds of inmates, they may work in a segregation unit, or they may work in a mental health or medical unit. As Officers work in these different posts they must adopt new roles. For example, Officers cannot treat inmates in a mental health unit the same way as inmates in general population. They must change their role from a rule enforcer to a rehabilitative role. This ambiguity is often too much for Officers to handle. “The result is low job satisfaction, depression, moodiness, and lowered self-esteem” (Matteson and Ivancevich 1982, 84).

Role Conflict is often encountered by Corrections Officers. There are two types of Role Conflict that they may experience. Intra-Role Conflict occurs when individuals receive different information on how to do their jobs (Jex , 1998, 12). Correction Officers may experience Intra-Role Conflict when one supervisor tells them what is important to do during their shift and another tells them something different. For example, one supervisor may feel that officers should be conducting a number of

searches of inmates and their property, while another may emphasize making continuous rounds in their assigned areas. This causes stress for Corrections Officers because they are forced to adopt differing roles according to the supervisor present.

The second type of role conflict is inter-role conflict. This occurs when “there is conflict between the requirement of the role as you see them and your own needs, goals, and values (Jex, 1998, 12).” Corrections Officers may experience inter-role conflict if they feel that rehabilitation should be the main goal of imprisonment. Their primary role is to enforce the rules and regulations of the institution and provide a safe, secure environment for inmates to live in. This role often conflicts with their desire to participate in the rehabilitative process and may lead to stress.

Work Overload and Underload:

Work Overload and Work Underload are two more stressors that Corrections Officers may experience. Work Underload occurs when a worker does not have enough work to do. This boredom can cause stress for many individuals. Work Underload can be quantitative or qualitative in nature. Quantitative work underload occurs from physical inactivity and idleness which may arise from having too little to do on the job. Qualitative work underload occurs when a job is not mentally stimulating. A worker experiencing this may become depressed because they do not feel that they are meeting their full potential (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982, 85).

Work Overload is probably the most common stressor that a worker may experience. “Stressed out generally refers to someone who has too much to do and too many demands” (Federal Bureau of Prisons Training Manual, 1996, 6). Corrections Officers may often experience work overload. They often deal with large numbers of

inmates, each having different problems or needs. On a daily basis officers may have an inmate who has medical concerns, another who may not be abiding by the rules of the institution, as well as dealing with added duties from their supervisors. The results of this overload may be “apathy, indecisiveness, poor judgment, and increased errors” (Federal Bureau of Prisons Training Manual, 1996, 6).

Interpersonal Conflicts:

Interaction with others is often a significant source of stress for Corrections Officers. Interpersonal conflict occurs when an individual has a disagreement with another person at work. These interpersonal conflicts may result in verbal confrontations, but can in extreme circumstances escalate into physical violence. (Jex, 1998, 16).

Interpersonal conflict for Corrections Officers can occur with inmates, coworkers or with supervisors. Interpersonal conflict with inmates occurs because many inmates do not follow the rules and lack respect for authority. A quote from Lombardo’s (1981) book, Guards Imprisoned, illustrates how one officer feels about interpersonal conflicts with inmates. The question was asked:

What’s the most difficult thing about being an officer?
Being able to take a little guff, sarcasm and insults from inmates. No matter who the inmate is you’re difficult to accept. Even if a guy asks you to do something for him, he says it in a sarcastic manner. I ask him to go away and come back later and he goes away cursing. A few days later he comes back and he’s okay. After that I might see him in the hall or out of place and tell him to get where he belongs and he mumbles under his breath. To put up with this kind of stuff every day is tough (118).

Interpersonal conflict can also occur between officers and other coworkers. Corrections Officers must often work with the same coworkers on a daily basis. This constant contact increases the opportunity for conflicts to occur. In general though, the

conflict between officers is usually not a significant stressor compared to the conflicts that occur between officers and their supervisors. This is due to the fact that coworkers are not in the position to influence your work, performance, rewards, and career progress like superiors are (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982, 108).

Matteson and Ivancevich (1982) list five ways that supervisors may cause stress for subordinates. Workers often experience stress when they feel that their supervisor plays favorites, does not communicate effectively, is not trustworthy, does not listen to their problems, and is unclear about how they are performing on the job (106).

Officers often experience a sense of powerlessness working in an institution. This occurs because they may not feel that they have the authority to handle situations that may arise. For example, if an Officer is having problems with an inmate they can write a disciplinary report for the inmate's actions. A supervisor may throw out this report, or the inmate may not be disciplined in a way that the officer feels is appropriate. This powerlessness often results in resentment towards supervisors, as well as an increase in stress (Lombardo, 1981, 120).

A study by Wright, Saylor, Gilman and Camp (1997) examined the effects of job control on prison workers. Their study reviewed the Prison Climate Survey distributed at 72 Federal Prisons. The Federal Bureau of Prisons conducts this survey annually. It measures the work environment, personal well being, personal safety and security, and quality of life of the Correctional Staff (532). After reviewing this survey Wright et al., concluded that "greater participation in decision making and increased job autonomy enhance prison workers' occupational outcomes, leading to elevated commitment to the

institution, higher job satisfaction, greater efficacy in working with inmates, and less job-related stress” (Wright et al., 1997, 532).

Officers may also feel that they have little input on decisions that affect their jobs. “When their advice is sought, officers often interpret solicitation as ‘asking for asking sake’ not as a ‘real’ attempt to solicit an officer’s suggestion” (Lombardo, 1981, 120). Often times, members of a prison’s administration have not worked as Corrections Officers. This adds to the frustration because officers may feel that individuals who have no experience working in their positions are not capable of implementing positive changes when necessary.

Social Support:

Social support is another term that is often used in stress research. “Social support can broadly be defined as the availability of help from supervisors, co-workers, family members, and friends in times of need” (Afzalur and Psenicka, 1996, 71). Research has not been consistent on the effects of social support on stress. Several studies conducted between 1982 and 1990 have shown that social support can reduce stress levels, while others conducted during this same time period have shown otherwise. In fact, Afzalur and Psenicka (1996) reported that individuals with social support have actually had higher levels of stress in some studies than individuals who do not (71).

A study conducted by Seifert (1999) examined the relationship of social support to stress among Corrections Officers. She states, “research to date indicates that social support is related to stress and well being. What is unclear is whether this is a main effect, buffering, or indirect relationship” (2).

Seifert surveyed 153 Corrections Officers in which social support was one variable examined. The study did not support the hypothesis that social support at home is a stress buffer. It did show; however, that “when home support is low, there may be a greater need to find a source of support at work. It is also possible that strong work support encourages greater attachment to work and less attachment to home” (5)

Cynicism:

Cynicism was another variable that Seifert (1999) examined in her study. Cynicism is defined as “a system of beliefs and attitudes that is manifested by statements and actions that assume that the motivations and behaviors of others, including organizations, are predominantly selfish, self-serving, or exploitative” (3). Corrections Officers constantly deal with offenders who have cynical attitudes and over time may begin to think that everyone has this trait. This may inhibit the officer’s ability to maintain healthy relationships with others. The result may be a loss of support outside of the working environment and an increase in stress levels.

Personality Type:

The type of personality an individual has may also affect how much stress they experience. Typically, Type A personalities are “intensely driven, anxious, and demanding” (Occupational Hazards, 1983, 93). Individuals who have Type A personalities often place too many demands on themselves. If they are not able to meet these demands they may experience a great deal of stress. Individuals with Type B personalities are typically more patient, laid back positive thinkers and are generally regarded by medical experts as having a better attitude towards stress. Type Bs get along

better with people and do not worry unnecessarily about seemingly insignificant problems (Occupational Hazards, 1983, 93).

Dr. Paul J. Rosch M.D., president of the American Institute of Stress reported in his article Stress: Causes and Corrections (as cited in Occupational Hazards 1983), that there exists what he calls a “stress resistant personality”. Individuals with stress resistant personality are able to cope with highly stressful situations that would harm others in a very effective manner. This can be attributed to their high level of dedication to their work and a refusal to let stressful situations affect their job performance (93).

Locus of control is a very important concept that is often used in stress research. Afzalur and Psenicka (1996) state that “locus of control refers to people’s beliefs about the extent to which they control the events that influence their lives” (71). They also state that individuals are either internalizers or externalizers. Internalizers believe that they control the events in their lives, whereas externalizers believe that “events in their lives are generally influenced by other people or by circumstances beyond their control (Afzalur and Psenicka, 1996, 71). In regards to stress, it has been theorized that internalizers should experience less stress and strain than externalizers should, however research does not support this. “Rahim (1990) found no evidence for a moderating effect of locus of control, and Cohen and Edward’s (1989) review of the stress literature indicated little evidence that personality factors function as stress buffers” (Afzalur and Psenicka, 1996, 71).

Negative Coping Behaviors

Individuals who experience stress on the job often cope with it in negative ways. The Federal Bureau of Prisons Training Manual (1996) lists several negative coping

behaviors that employees may use, as well as how these behaviors may affect them.

Examples of negative coping behaviors include smoking, drinking in excess, overeating, watching too much television, using drugs, and internalizing problems. (7)

Many individuals smoke as a way to relax and reduce stress. Nicotine, one chemical found in cigarettes is a stimulant that actually gives an individual an adrenaline rush that lessens their ability to relax. Additional chemicals in cigarettes are poisons that cause a great deal of harm to the heart, lungs, and other important body organs.

Correctional Officers often must respond to emergency situations by running to the area where an incident has occurred. If the Officer smokes regularly, they may be out of breath when they arrive, resulting in an inability to provide adequate help to a fellow Officer or staff member in need (Cornelius, 1994, 34).

Abusing alcohol is also a negative way that workers use to cope with stress. Alcohol, if used in a sensible manner, is not a problem; however, many officers drink heavily. As a result, officers who choose to drink as a way to cope with problems on the job will likely experience physical health problems such as heart disease, liver disease, and cancer (Cornelius, 1994, 38).

These negative coping behaviors can affect individuals in a variety of ways. Job performance will usually decline if a worker is not coping appropriately. For example, if an employee is drinking too much they may not make it to work on time, or they may get behind on assignments they are given (Federal Bureau of Prisons Training Manual, 1996, 8). Negative coping behaviors may also affect an individual's interpersonal relationships. Using the previous example, individuals who begin to drink in excess may not communicate their problems with family members and drink as a way to escape these

problems. If communication breaks down and alcohol becomes the answer to job stress, personal relationships will suffer.

Physical and mental health problems also occur when an individual uses negative coping techniques. If an individual drinks in excess, uses drugs, overeats, and leads a sedentary life style it is probable that their health will suffer. If they continue these behaviors over an extended period of time, they may develop certain diseases. These diseases and health problems include hypertension, arteriosclerosis, ulcers, diabetes, sexual problems, headaches, and coronary heart disease.

Hypertension is called the “silent killer” because it is estimated that fewer than half the people suffering from it are even aware that they have the problem. “If it is chronic it strains the heart and blood vessels and can cause heart attacks and brain hemorrhages” (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982, 33). The reason that individuals under stress experience hypertension is that the body reacts to stress by increasing blood pressure. If a person is constantly experiencing stress and there is no relief from it, their blood pressure will remain high (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982, 33).

Another disease that can be the result of stress is arteriosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. Stress has been linked to arteriosclerosis because cholesterol levels rise as stress levels increase. If the arteries harden as a result of these high cholesterol levels an individual may experience a stroke. Approximately 600,000 lives are lost to this disease annually (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982, 33).

Ulcers are another health problem commonly associated with stress. “They are directly caused by excessive secretions of stomach acids which attack the susceptible digestive system linings, causing irritation or inflammation” (Matteson and Ivancevich,

1982, 34). When an individual is experiencing stress, the body produces more of these stomach acids, thus increasing the possibility of developing ulcers.

Stress has also been linked to diabetes, a serious disease involving insulin deficiencies that render its victims unable to absorb enough blood sugar (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982, 34). Although stress has not been shown to directly cause diabetes, it does increase the possibility that individuals who have a predisposition for the disease will acquire it. It has been shown that blood sugar levels rise when an individual is under stress. The body must increase insulin levels when this occurs. Diabetics are unable to produce enough insulin, and damage to the pancreas may result. "Thus anything which tends to elevate blood sugar levels such as stress, is potentially damaging to those with diabetic predispositions" (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982, 34).

Headaches are often a frequent health problem that individuals under stress may experience. A common response of the body to stress is muscular tension. If an individual has muscular tension over a long period of time they will eventually get a headache as a result (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982, 35).

Individuals who have high levels of stress on the job not only experience physical problems, but they may suffer from psychological problems as well. Some common psychological problems include cognitive disturbances, anxiety, depression, and anger. Individuals who experience cognitive disturbances often have difficulty remembering things, and their mind may go blank. This reaction to stress will hinder an individual's work performance because they forget to complete required work (Afzalur and Psenicka, 1996, 69).

Anxiety is another psychological problem associated with stress. Anxiety often involves “hand trembling, upset or sour stomach, feeling faint or dizzy, avoiding things, and feeling afraid and fearful” (Afzalur and Psenicka, 1996, 70). Individuals who experience anxiety may develop physical symptoms resulting in absences at work. A third psychological symptom that may develop from stress is depression. Depressed individuals may feel “lonely, downhearted, bored, or low in energy; have a loss of sexual interest. In some cases individuals may contemplate suicide” (Afzalur and Psenicka, 1996, 70). Anger is the final psychological symptom of stress. Individuals who experience high levels of stress tend to lose their temper easily, and have little patience with others. These employees may be involved in violent confrontations with supervisors or coworkers if stress levels continue to rise without being addressed (Afzalur and Psenicka, 1996,70).

Positive Coping Techniques

Many of the problems associated with stress can be eliminated if individuals learn to cope in positive ways. Moracco (1985) states that individuals can cope positively with stress through advanced planning, relaxation techniques, lifestyle assessment, and cognitive restructuring.

Advanced planning is a simple way to cope with stress. It involves anticipating events in an individual’s life that may be potentially stressful and planning ahead to deal with the situation effectively. When individuals plan they are taking control over events in their lives, which reduces stress. The only problem with advanced planning is that many individuals use denial as a way of coping with stress. If they do not believe

internally that a situation will be stressful they will not plan on ways to cope in advance (Moracco, 1985, 23).

Lifestyle Assessment is another way that individuals may cope positively with stress. Often times, individuals are living a lifestyle that is harmful to their physical and mental health. It is important for individuals to assess their goals and things that are important to them as a way to manage stress. Moracco states that Correctional Workers should: “make a list of five things you want to accomplish during the rest of your working life or correctional career. Think of at least three things that you dislike about correctional work. Also make a list of three things you like about yourself along with three things you dislike about yourself” (Moracco, 1985, 23). By writing this information down an individual will be able to examine if job stress is worth experiencing in order to accomplish career goals.

Individuals who are experiencing stress may also use relaxation techniques to cope. They may include meditation, deep breathing, yoga, progressive relaxation, and focusing. Each of these techniques reduces the physical and mental health problems associated with stress and can actually be practiced at work without interfering with job duties (Moracco, 1985, 23).

Religious activities are also helpful for many individuals as a way to cope with stress. These activities allow individuals such as Corrections Officers to meet people who are not involved in their line of work and to participate in something positive. The negative prison environment is the environment that Officers are constantly subjected to; participating in positive religious activities is an effective way to cope with stress (Cornelius, 1994, 99).

Cognitive restructuring can also help individuals cope with stress. This involves changing thought patterns that make stress so harmful. “It is the personal belief about what has happened that is responsible for stress. If you do not get the promotion you are seeking and therefore conclude you are a miserable failure, you are engaging in negative thoughts” (Moracco, 1985, 23). The key to cognitive restructuring is learning how to change these negative thought patterns into positive ones. By using the previous example, an individual may conclude that they are close to receiving a promotion and with a little work will be ready the next time it is offered. Rather than thinking they are a failure they can think of positive ways to cope with the disappointment.

Effective time management is a very important tool that can be used to reduce stress. It is common for individuals who have heavy workloads and little time to complete work to experience job stress. It is important that individuals set priorities to manage their time effectively. Moracco (1985) suggests that tasks should be divided into three categories; those that are important to achieve life or professional goals, those that are important to other people or that you just want to do, and finally those tasks that are not important to your life. When individuals budget their time to complete the tasks that are important to achieve life or professional goals first they will feel that they have control over their time which reduces stress. He also states that it is very important for individuals to learn to say “no” when they are asked to complete tasks that are unimportant and productive in meeting their personal or professional goal.

Individuals can also cope with stress by living a healthy lifestyle. They can accomplish this by eating a well balanced diet and exercising on a regular basis. Cornelius (1994) states that stressed out Correctional Workers often overeat and consume

too much saturated fat and cholesterol. He states that individuals should follow the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) recommendations for a balanced diet. The U.S.D.A. recommends that individuals have three to five servings of vegetables, two to four fruits, six to eleven breads, cereals, rice and pasta, two to three meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts and two to three milk, yogurt, and cheese. The U.S.D.A. also recommends that fats, oils, and sweets are consumed on a limited basis (108).

Cornelius (1994) also states that when individuals are under stress their body becomes low in important vitamins and minerals (109). Vitamin C is depleted because it is required by the body to activate the adrenal hormones. These hormones are used when the body responds to stress. In order to compensate for the loss it is important that individuals maintain an adequate level of Vitamin C in their diets or take supplements regularly (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982, 227). The B-complex vitamins are also depleted when individuals are under stress. This is due to the fact that these vitamins are necessary in carbohydrate metabolism. When an individual is under stress the body's metabolism rate increases and these vitamins are used up quickly. To remain healthy and combat these problems individuals must ensure that they have adequate amounts of B-complex vitamins in their body (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982, 227).

In addition to a healthy diet, individuals should also exercise as a positive way to cope with stress. Exercise benefits individuals in a number of ways. Matteson and Ivancevich (1982) state that exercise increases an individuals strength, replaces fat with muscle, lowers cholesterol levels, strengthens the heart as well as improving their self-image (204). It also helps reduce the effects of stress on the body. When individuals experience stress, their body reacts by going into the "fight or flight" mode. Once the

body is in this state it is geared up for a physical response. Exercise is a simple way of allowing this physical response to occur. “If you learn to recognize when you are stressed and respond physically within a short period of time, you are probably dealing with your stress in the most effective manner possible” (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982, 207).

Cornelius (1994) suggests that individuals who work in a correctional environment should engage in an aerobic exercise that they find enjoyable. Examples may include swimming, running, and playing sports such as basketball or racquetball. By finding an activity that is enjoyable an individual will not become bored and stop exercising in a short period of time (1).

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction’s Pre-service Training Manual on stress states that individuals should participate in enjoyable and relaxing hobbies to cope with stress (3). Too often, individuals fall into a pattern in which they are doing the same things every day. Their time away from work is spent completing chores at home or running errands. To better cope with stress, individuals need to occasionally break from their normal routine. This can be accomplished when individuals discover a relaxing hobby or become involved in a variety of activities that they find enjoyable. Stress can be reduced most effectively when both the personal and work environment is addressed (Moracco, 1985, 26).

As discussed earlier, shift work is a significant stressor that Corrections Officers must face. Moore-Ede (1983) as cited by Cornelius (1994) offers the following suggestions to officers to cope positively with shift work. She suggests that officers should prepare for the midnight shift by staying up late for a few days before going on

that shift. This allows the body to gradually adjust to the change rather than experiencing an unhealthy shock to the system. Secondly, individuals who work the night shift should make their sleeping environment as normal as possible. This can be accomplished by darkening the room as much as possible and putting in earplugs to block out daytime noises. When an individual wakes up it is important to make the room as bright as possible. These procedures will make the body feel as if it were in a normal sleeping pattern that reduces disruptions in the circadian rhythm. The final suggestion given by Moore-Ede is for individuals to watch their diet. Eating healthy foods makes things easier for the digestive system when an individual is initially on the night shift.

Management Problems Resulting From Employee Stress

Stress not only causes problems for individuals but also creates many significant problems for managers. An article found in the John Liner Review (1997) and reprinted on the internet site Jobstress.com examined the effects of stress on employee productivity. The article states that job stress often results in employee absences and that many employees take time off as a way to cope with the pressures of their job. The article also states that employees who are experiencing high levels of stress are twice as likely to miss more than five days of work annually than those who are not under stress (24). A report by the California Workers Compensation Institute stated that mental stress accounted for a 700 percent increase in Workers Compensation claims between 1979 and 1988. They also reported that almost seven out of ten stress related claims were the result of pressures on the job (John Liner Review, 1997).

Employee stress is resulting in an increase in litigation against organizations. Today's society has become one in which lawsuits are increasingly used as a solution to any conflict that an individual may have. Lawsuits can occur for an organization if the worker feels that they have little control over their work environment. St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company (1997) published a report that stated that it is important for organizations to identify stressors in the work environment and take appropriate action to eliminate or reduce the harm that they are causing to its employees. If the organization takes a proactive approach to help reduce job stress, they have a better chance of avoiding lawsuits (John Liner Review, 1997).

Stress in the work place may also result in high numbers of grievances being filed. Grievances indicate that an organization is having problems, and employees may be using the grievance procedure as a way to deal with the powerlessness that they may be experiencing. High numbers of grievances also indicate a poor morale within the organization. If morale is low the turnover rate is usually high. A study by the Bureau of National Affairs as cited in the John Liner Review (1997), stated that forty percent of employee turnover is due to job stress. The study also reported that employers must address this problem because of the money that has to be spent to hire and train new employees (John Liner Review, 1997).

Accidents are another significant problem that stressed individuals may experience. Individuals often are not as attentive and do not get adequate rest when under stress. These factors inevitably lead to accidents on the job (John Liner Review, 1997). Accidents at work may result in workers compensation claims, and employee

absences. If this occurs organizations may be forced to pay overtime to replace those injured on the job.

Stress may also affect a worker's thinking process. As discussed above, this may result in accidents, but it may also result in poor decisions being made by an employee. "This is because endorphins- nature's painkillers- are released under stressful situations. Besides killing pain, these natural chemicals also dull our ability to think and feel. Under extreme or unremitting stress, people become intellectually, emotionally, and interpersonally dull. This can result in costly and sometimes life-threatening mistakes" (John Liner Review, 1997).

Conflict and Interpersonal problems are also common for workers experiencing stress. Today's workforce often has individuals working together in teams. If these individuals have personal differences with other members of the team, a great deal of stress may develop. On occasion stress experienced by workers may actually result in violence. "The stress brought on by interpersonal challenges and conflicts, combined with the fact that many people are operating just below their boiling point creates a potentially volatile situation" (John Liner Review, 1997). As mentioned previously, a sense of powerlessness may cause workers to act in an unhealthy manner. In extreme circumstances workers may act out violently towards their coworkers or supervisors. In fact, in a study conducted by the American Management Association in 1994, (as cited in the John Liner Review) "homicide accounted for 17 percent of all deaths in the workplace".

Often times employees who are "stressed out" are resistant to any changes an organization may try to implement. This is attributed to the fact that workers who

experience high levels of stress usually resort to their traditional or old way of coping with the situation, even if it is no longer effective. (John Liner Review, 1997).

The final result of stress on an employee's production is what is called "The Loss of Intellectual Capital" (John Liner Review, 1997). If individuals in an organization are experiencing too much stress, they may not be able to develop innovative ideas to improve the operation of the organization. "Research shows that when people are in high-stress situations over which they have no control, their thought process becomes more rigid, simplistic, and superficial" (John Liner Review, 1997). If workers are unable to think of innovative ideas the organization will fail because it will not be competitive in today's marketplace.

The Role of Management In Reducing Stress Levels of Employees

An article found on the Internet and reprinted from the Supper Club Magazine (1997) lists several ways that administrators can help reduce stress levels of employees. One way is by being flexible. If employees feel that they have no control over their work they will encounter higher levels of job stress. Allowing employees to participate in decisions that affect their jobs is a simple way to reduce stress (1).

The second way that administrators can help reduce stress on the job is by teaching employees how to negotiate. Often times employees are afraid to say "no" to supervisors when they are overwhelmed with work and will take on additional assignments without even discussing it with their supervisors. When employees learn how to negotiate and express their concerns they will be more satisfied with their job. In addition, supervisors may be able to assign the work to another employee who has the

time available. This increases the chances of the work being completed in a more efficient and effective manner.

Managers can also reduce stress by setting deadlines that are clear and attainable to employees. Employees often feel stress when they are given assignments that must be completed immediately or are given assignments with no deadlines specified.

Communicating with employees that assignments are due on a specific date or by the end of the month can eliminate the unnecessary sense of urgency often experienced by employees as well as reducing their stress on the job (Supper Club Magazine, 1997, 1)

Administrators can offer employees time off as an alternative to money when they work overtime. Many employees would enjoy an extra day off to spend time with family or just to take a “time out” from work. Time away from work is often a necessary way to cope with stress on the job. Too often employees choose not to take vacation time during the year. As these individuals continue to work week to week, without a break, the pressures of the job will continue to build leading to a more rapid onset of burnout (Supper Club Magazine, 1997, 1).

Organizational Culture is an important term used by organizations and is a very important concept used to determine if employees at a particular institution are likely to experience job stress. “Organizational Culture is a persistent, patterned way of thinking about the central task of human relationships within an organization ...[and] like human culture generally, it is passed on from one generation to the next” (Fleisher, 1996, 83).

Prisons have formal and informal cultures. Formal cultures are established through institutional policies and procedures that must be followed by institutional staff. Informal culture deals mainly with the communication patterns among inmates, staff members and

their supervisors. Fleisher (1996) states: “if an institution’s informal culture is perverse and angry, staffers and inmates’ speech changes, solidarity diminishes and department productivity falters” (84).

The Federal Bureau of Prisons has developed a system to examine the informal culture of its institutions. The Institution Character Profile (I.C.P.) involves the review of institutional records and conducting interviews with staff and inmates by outside evaluators. This information is examined to determine the quality of management at each institution. If the evaluators determine that the institution has a high turnover rate (often related to job stress) and inmates are living in an unhealthy environment than the prison administrators’ jobs may be on the line (Fleisher, 1996, 84).

As discussed earlier, exercise has been found to reduce stress levels of individuals as well as benefiting their overall physical health. Organizations can help reduce stress by incorporating a fitness program for employees. This can be accomplished by setting up an account with a local health club or by incorporating a fitness center at job sites. The benefits of exercise are that it can help reduce absences due to stress and poor physical health as well as reducing the hours of overtime paid to replace unhealthy workers (Supper Club Magazine, 1997, 1).

It is very important for administrators to take an active role in developing policies that deal with the important problem of job stress. As stated earlier, job stress is responsible for much of the following: employee absences, grievances, litigation, accidents and workers compensation claims. Job stress affects worker’s health that in turn affects an organization’s budget. Millions of dollars are spent by organizations every year on employee health problems that are directly associated with stress. “With

research implicating stress in 60 percent to 90 percent of medical problems, companies cannot afford to ignore the huge health-care expense employee stress creates” (The John Liner Review, 1, 1997).

Many organizations have developed employee assistance programs to deal with job stress. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction uses Ohio’s Employee Assistance Program. This program is designed to help employees with problems such as deaths in their family, alcohol and drug abuse, financial problems as well as stress at no charge. An informational pamphlet on the Ohio Employee Assistance Program states that the state of Ohio recognizes that people are it’s most important resource and has the following message to employees.

The Ohio EAP is a resource for when you need it. We are there when you need a sounding board; coaching; direction; or a referral to short-term counseling, an attorney, or a financial advisor. We are there when you are concerned about a family member, a friend, or a coworker (17).

Ohio’s Employee Assistance Program recognizes that employees may be subjected to Critical Incident Stress. As discussed earlier, Corrections Officers can be subjected to riots, violent assaults and other traumatic events that can cause a great amount of harm to officers if they do not deal with it in appropriate ways. The Ohio E.A.P. states that: “supervisors must recognize signs of Critical Incident Stress and refer individuals for professional assistance when necessary. Symptoms of Critical Incident Stress include intrusive images (dreams or flashbacks), emotional numbing, fear of repetition of the event, hyper startle response, withdrawal from others, depression, and intensified anxiety” (7).

Summary

In this chapter, stress was defined and its negative impact on health and behavior was discussed. Also presented were specific stress management techniques that individuals can use as well as ways that managers can assist employees with reducing stress in their lives.

In the next chapter, methods will be discussed as to how the data concerning stress levels among the Correctional Officers who participated in this study was collected. In addition, the methods by which the data was analyzed will also be discussed.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Stress creates many negative emotional and physical problems for individuals if not dealt with appropriately. Research indicates that Correctional Officers are highly susceptible to stress in the performance of their jobs. In order to evaluate the magnitude and causes of stress, a survey of Correctional Officers was conducted.

Location

Grafton Correctional Institution, which opened in 1988, is a medium/minimum security institution located in Grafton, Ohio was selected for the study. This location was selected due to its convenience for the researcher. As of April 2001, the population of the facility was 1,352 inmates. Of those inmates, 55 percent are African-American, 41 percent are Caucasian, three percent are Hispanic, and the remaining one percent are other races. The annual cost to house an inmate in Grafton Correctional Institution is \$19,932. This facility is under the jurisdiction of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC, <http://www.drc.state.oh.us>, 2001).

Research Participants

Correctional Officers at Grafton Correction Institution were solicited to participate in this study. As of April 2001, there were 390 total staff members, 221 of which are security staff (ODRC, <http://www.drc.state.oh.us>, 2001). The security staff are assigned to work four different shifts. The 1st shift staff members work from 6:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., the Special Duty staff members work from 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.. The 2nd shift

staff members work from 2:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m., and the 3rd shift staff members work 10:00 p.m, - 6:00 a.m.

Methods and Survey Instrument

The researcher attended all role call sessions and distributed the survey instrument during that time (See Appendix A). The 3rd shift Officers were given their survey instruments at the conclusion of their shift. A total of 128 surveys instruments were distributed. The officers were also provided with a postage-paid, addressed envelope in order to return the completed instruments. The envelopes were addressed to Youngstown State University, Criminal Justice Department. This was done in order to assure the confidentiality of the respondents.

Miller and Smith, Psychologists from Boston University Medical Center designed the instrument that was utilized. The instrument asks respondents to indicate their participation, or lack of participation, in behaviors that may make individuals vulnerable to stress. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction has used this instrument for training in the area of stress. To enhance the instrument for the purposes of this research project, demographical questions were added. These demographical variables included: age, gender, shift, years of service, marital status, and number of dependants. These factors together with the survey were used to determine which Officers were more vulnerable to stress.

This study did not involve any risks to the participants since they were not asked for their names. Once the surveys were completed they were mailed directly to Youngstown State University in a pre-postage paid envelope which eliminated the possibility that coworkers had access to them. In addition to the surveys, information on

effective stress management techniques was distributed to Officers with the surveys for educational purposes (See Appendix E).

Officers should not have experienced any discomfort while participating in the study and were able to score the survey once they had completed it. Of the 128 instruments that were distributed, 64 (50%) were returned. Twenty-four 24 from 1st shift (38%), 15 from Special Duty (24%), 15 from 2nd shift (24%) and nine from 3rd shift (14%) is the break down of respondents.

Research Objective

As stated earlier, the purpose for the study is to determine the magnitude of stress for Correctional Officers. The degree of stress that Officers experience was also evaluated. The Miller and Smith instrument were used in order to determine the main causes of this stress. Once the magnitude, degree, and causes of stress are determined than recommendations can be made to help alleviate this problem.

Variables and Data Analysis

The demographical information that was collected was used to determine if age, gender, marital status, shift, years of service, personality type, relationship with supervisors, as well as rational for correctional practices contributed to stress vulnerability. These variables were analyzed using SPSS/PC+ a computer software packet used to calculate statistical data. Basic chi-square test, analysis of variance, and t-test were used to evaluate these variables. Chi-square test were utilized when only nominal data were available. T-test was used when the difference in mean scores

between two groups were compared. The analysis of variance was used when the difference in mean scores for more than two groups were compared.

The items in the Miller and Smith test were used to further explain some of the causes of stress for Correctional Officers. These variables dealt with: substance abuse, diet, social support, family support, sleeping habits, social activities, time management, relaxation, and basic health habits. These variables were measured at the ordinal level. During data analysis, they were often treated as interval level data. This procedure is not uncommon. Again chi-square test, t-test, and analysis of variance were utilized to analyze this data.

In the Miller and Smith test, the statistics were analyzed to determine the overall percentage of officers that are vulnerable to stress, seriously vulnerable to stress, and extremely vulnerable to stress. Each of the scores on these items were added together to obtain a total vulnerability score.

Summary

In this chapter the location of the research, the participants, the objective for the research, and the instrument that was used were discussed. Also the methodology and the data analysis were described. In the next chapter, the results are presented. In the final chapter, the implications of the findings are presented and discussed.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine what factors make Corrections Officers vulnerable to stress. Also examined was the magnitude of stress for Correctional Officers, specifically at Grafton Correctional Institution. In order to gain this information, a survey instrument was given to 128 Correctional Officers at Grafton. The instrument asked demographic questions as well as the Miller and Smith stress test. The Miller and Smith test is an instrument that is used by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction for training in the area of stress management.

Previous research on this topic has focused on the job of a Corrections Officer, and factors within the prison environment that cause stress to develop. This research expands on previous studies, as well as examining the role of the individual in combating the problems typically associated with stress.

Vulnerability to Stress

Survey instruments were given to 128 Correctional Officers at Grafton Correctional Institution in Grafton, Ohio. Of the 128 instruments that were distributed, 64 (50%) were returned. Twenty-four from 1st shift (38%), 15 from Special Duty (24%), 15 from 2nd shift (24%) and nine from 3rd shift (14%) is the break down of respondents.

A little over half (51.7%) of the Officers scored in a range that indicated that they are vulnerable to stress. A little under half (48.3%) of the Officers scored in a range that indicated that they are not vulnerable to stress. The average vulnerability score was 32.73. Any score over 30 indicates a vulnerability to stress.

Demographics of Sample

To better understand vulnerability to stress, information concerning demographics was collected and analyzed. Participants were asked several questions for the purpose of obtaining demographic information for the study prior to completing the Miller and Smith stress test. This information was evaluated using t-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and chi-square tests to evaluate the demographic information of the Officers who participated in the study. The demographic information is presented below.

Gender

Of the 64 Officers that participated in the study, 63.8 percent (n = 37) of them were male and 36.2 percent (n = 21) were female. This is a slight overrepresentation of female officers since only 26 percent of the officers at Grafton Correctional Institution are female. A chi-square test was conducted to determine if there was a difference between male and female Officers and stress vulnerability. There was no significant difference between male and female Officers. Of the male Officers who participated in the study, 51.4 percent are vulnerable to stress and 52.9 percent of the women are also (See Table 1).

Table 1

Comparison of Male and Female Officers and Stress Vulnerability

	MALE	FEMALE
VULNERABLE TO STRESS	N = 19 51.4%	N = 9 52.9%
NOT VULNERABLE TO STRESS	N = 18 48.6%	N = 8 47.1%

Age

The next demographic question dealt with the age of the Officers. Officers ranged in age from 22 to 61 years old. The average age was 39.87 years old. Three of the officers did not indicate their age on the survey instrument. A t-test was conducted in order to determine if older or younger Officers are more vulnerable to stress. The mean age for Officers who are vulnerable to stress was 41 years 6 months. Those who are not vulnerable to stress had an average age of 37 years 3 months. Those vulnerable to stress were approximately four and a half years older than those not vulnerable to stress. These results are not statistically significant and this study has not presented any evidence to support age as an important variable in determining if an Officer will be more vulnerable to stress.

Marital Status

Also examined was the marital status of the Officers to help determine stress vulnerability. The marital status of officers was grouped into three categories: 1) Married, 2) Single, and 3) Divorced/Separated. The majority of the Officers, 58.3 percent (n = 35), were married. Single Officers represented approximately 26.7 percent (n = 16) of the sample, and the remaining 15 percent (n = 9) of the Officers were divorced or separated. Four of the respondents did not indicate their marital status. The data was recoded so that Officers were classified as either married or not married. This was done so a simple comparison could be conducted. A chi-square test was conducted to determine if those Officers who are married are more or less vulnerable to stress than those who are not. There were no statistical differences between married and unmarried Officers. One-half of unmarried Officers are vulnerable to stress whereas one-half are not. Of those Officers who are married, 52.9 percent are vulnerable to stress whereas 47.1 percent are not (See Table 2).

Table 2

Comparison Between Married and Unmarried Officers and Stress Vulnerability

	MARRIED	UNMARRIED
VULNERABLE TO STRESS	N = 18 52.9%	N = 11 50.0%
NOT VULNERABLE TO STRESS	N = 16 47.1%	N = 11 50.0%

Years of Service and Employment at Other State Institutions

Besides age, gender, and marital status, information concerning years of service and employment at other state institutions was collected. The mean length of time an officer has worked for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction is 7 years 3 months. Of the 64 Officers who participated in the study, 19 had five or less years of service. Twenty Officers had worked between five and ten years and 20 had worked ten years or more.

A t-test was conducted to help determine if years of service has an impact on an Officer's vulnerability to stress. The results were statistically significant ($f = 10.02$, $p \leq .003$), however this is not substantively important because the mean difference was only about seven months. The average length of time that Officers who are vulnerable to stress have worked is 7 years 3 months. Those not vulnerable to stress have worked approximately 6 years 8 months.

Only 12.5 percent ($n = 8$) of the Officers reported that they had worked at other State Institutions. A large portion (87.5%) of those Officers had worked at one other facility. One Officer reported that he/she had worked at 10 other institutions.

Shift

In addition to years of service, respondents were asked to indicate the shift they worked. Of the 64 Officers who responded to the survey, 38.1 percent ($n = 24$) were on 1st shift (6:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.), 23.8 percent ($n = 15$) were on 2nd shift (2:00 p.m. – 10:00p.m.) and 23.8 percent were on Special Duty (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.). The remaining 14.3 percent ($n = 9$) of Officers were on 3rd shift (10:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m.).

ANOVA was run to determine if Officers on a particular shift were more vulnerable to stress than those on other shifts. The ANOVA was used since comparison of means between more than two groups was needed.

The results were not statistically significant, however they were substantively significant. The greatest disparity was between 2nd and 3rd shift. The average vulnerability score for Officers on 2nd shift was 29.79; on 3rd shift the average score was 35.00. Any score over 30 indicates a vulnerability to stress.

Statistical tests were conducted to determine which variables made Officers on 3rd shift more vulnerable to stress than those on 2nd shift. Officers responded to the survey questions using a 1 to 5 scale (an ordinal scale, where 1 indicates that the person frequently engages in the listed behavior and 5 indicates that they rarely engage in that behavior). Third shift Officers, on average; do not get as much sleep compared to those on 2nd shift. The average score for 3rd shift Officers on the question "I get 7 to 8 hours of sleep at least 4 nights a week" was 3.33; 2nd shift Officers had a score of 2.40.

The results also indicate that 3rd shift Officers do not exercise as much as those on 2nd shift. The mean score for 3rd shift Officers on the question "I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week" was 3.44; 2nd shift Officers averaged 2.67 on this question. Higher numbers indicate that Officers do an activity less frequently.

Third shift Officers averaged slightly higher on the question "I have regular conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems, e.g., chores, money and daily living issues." They averaged 3.00 whereas 2nd shift Officers averaged 2.27. The final problem that contributes to a higher vulnerability score among 3rd shift Officers

is smoking. Third shift Officers averaged 3.67 on the question "I smoke less than half a pack of cigarettes a day." 2nd shift Officers averaged 2.87.

Second shift Officers drink significantly more caffeinated drinks than 3rd shift Officers. They averaged 3.73 on the question "I drink fewer than three cups of coffee, tea, or cola drinks a day." Third shift Officers averaged 2.78 on this question. This was the only question that 2nd shift Officers scored significantly higher on than those on 3rd shift.

Relationships with Supervisors

To better understand vulnerability to stress, Officers were also asked about their relationship with their supervisors. They were asked to describe it as either positive or negative. A large portion (79.4%, n = 50) of the Officers indicated that their relationship with their supervisors was positive. Approximately 17.5 percent (n = 11) indicated that the relationship was negative, and the remaining 3.2 percent (n = 2) indicated that it was mixed.

Personality Type

Personality type was another demographic variable that was examined. Officers were asked to indicate whether they have Assertive (Type A) or Laid Back (Type B) personalities. Half of the Officers reported that they had an assertive (Type A) personality, whereas 46.8 percent indicated that they had a more laid back (Type B) personality. The remaining 3.2 percent indicated that they were a combination of both. Two Officers did not indicate that they were either personality type.

A chi-square test was conducted to examine if those Officers with Type A (Assertive) personality types are more or less vulnerable to stress than Type B (Laid back) personalities. The results indicate that Officers with Type A personalities are less vulnerable to stress than Officers with Type B. Only 37.9 percent (n = 11) of Officers with Type A personalities are vulnerable to stress, 70.4 percent (n = 19) of Officers with Type B personalities are vulnerable (See Table 3).

Table 3

Personality Type and Stress Vulnerability

	TYPE A PERSONALITY	TYPE B PERSONALITY
VULNERABLE TO STRESS	N = 11 37.9%	N = 19 70.4%
NOT VULNERABLE TO STRESS	N = 18 62.1%	N = 8 29.6%
$X^2 = 5.92, P \leq .01$		

Primary Purpose of Prisons

The final demographical variable examined was the Officers' philosophy concerning the primary purpose for prisons. Officers were given four basic purposes to select from (Rehabilitation, Deterrence, Incapacitation, Punishment) and were asked to circle the one that they thought was the primary purpose. As discussed earlier, role conflicts are often a significant source of stress for Corrections Officers. Based on this

previous research finding, it was theorized that Officers who believe that rehabilitation is the primary purpose of prisons would be more vulnerable to stress because of the custodial role that they hold within the institution.

The results did not support this theory. Nineteen Officers (30.2%) indicated punishment as the primary purpose of prisons. Fifteen (23.8%) thought that deterrence is the primary purpose, 22.2% (n = 14) indicated rehabilitation and the remaining 10 Officers (15.9%) indicated that incapacitation is the primary purpose of prisons. There were no major differences on stress vulnerability and what they felt was the primary purpose of prisons. An equal number of Officers were vulnerable/not vulnerable in each of these areas.

Strongest Sources of Stress Among Officers

To better understand what causes stress for Correctional Officers, they were asked to indicate what they felt was their strongest source of stress. They were asked the open-ended question: "What is your strongest source of stress?" Of the 64 respondents, 16 (25%) indicated that other staff members are their strongest sources of stress; 12 (18.6%) indicated that supervisors/administration are. This is consistent with prior research that has shown that staff and supervisors are often the strongest sources of stress among Correction Officers. Of the remaining respondents, seven indicated that family is their strongest source of stress, five stated that work in general is, and three indicated that money/bills are their strongest sources of stress. The remaining answers were individualized responses. For a detailed listing of responses see Appendix F. It is

important to note, from the responses given, that not one officer wrote inmates as their strongest source of stress.

Analysis of Survey Questions

Once the data were analyzed concerning demographic variables and their contributions to stress levels, data analysis concerning the Miller and Smith stress test were conducted. The following are the results of this analysis.

Factors That Do Not Contribute to Stress Vulnerability Among Corrections Officers

The survey questions were divided into several categories according to how they influence the Officer's vulnerability to stress. Questions 3, 4, 15 and 16 all pertained to the Officer's family as a means of social support (again see Appendix A). For the most part, Officers did not seem to have a lack of social support from family in their lives. Question 3 asked Officers if they give and receive affection regularly. Only 11 percent (n = 7) of the Officers indicated that they did not. Forty-eight (75%) Officers reported that they had at least one relative within 50 miles that they could rely on.

Question 15 asked Officers if they were able to speak openly about their feelings when angry or worried. Over half of the Officers (n = 34, 53.2%) indicated that they did, 23.5 percent (n = 15) indicated that they did not. The remaining 23.4 percent (n = 15) were in the middle range. The final question pertaining to family social support was question 16. This question asked Officers if they have regular conversations with the people they live with about domestic problems such as chores, money and daily living

issues. Over half of the Officers (n = 36, 56.2 %) indicated that they did have these conversations, 25 percent (n = 16) indicated that they did not.

Social Support from Friends

Two of the survey questions (12, 13) dealt with the role of friends as a means of social support. Question 12 asked Officers if they have a network of friends and acquaintances. Twenty-seven (47.2%) indicated that they do have a network of friends and acquaintances, 25.1 percent (n = 16) indicated that they did not. Officers were also asked (question 13) if they had one or more friends to confide in about personal matters. Most of the Officers 61.9 percent (n = 39) indicated that they do, whereas only 19 percent (n = 12) indicated that they do not.

General Health

Question 14 asked Officers if they are in good health (including eyesight, hearing, and teeth). The majority of Officers 71.9 percent (n = 46) indicated that they are in good health. Only 9.4 percent (n = 6) of the respondents indicated that they were not in good health.

Lifestyle Choices

Several of the survey questions address the influence of lifestyle choices on an individual's vulnerability to stress. These lifestyle choices include diet (questions 1, 7, 19), adequate rest (question 2), exercise (question 5), smoking (question 6) and general health (question 14). Diet was one of the factors that did not seem to be a significant influence on an Officer's vulnerability score. Forty-four (69.8%) of the Officers

indicated that they eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day. Drinking was not a significant problem by most Officers either. Thirty-three (51.6%) of the Officers reported that they take fewer than five alcoholic drinks a week; 39.1 percent (n = 25) of them indicated that they drink more.

Money

Officers were asked if they have an adequate income to meet basic expenses. The majority of Officers Thirty-six (56.3%) indicated that they do have an adequate income, 11.0 percent (n = 7) reported that they do not. The remaining 32.8 percent (n = 21) were in the middle range.

Religion

Having strong religious beliefs may also help reduce an individual's vulnerability to stress. Officers were asked (question 10) if they get strength from their religious beliefs. Thirty-two (50.8%) of the Officers responded in a way that indicated that they do get strength from their religious beliefs, only 15.8 percent (n = 10) reported that they do not. One Officer did not respond to this question.

Time Outs

It is important for individuals to take "time outs" to help decrease their vulnerability to stress. Question 20 asked Officers if they take quiet time for themselves during the day. There were no significant differences between those Officers who took quiet time for themselves and those who did not. Twenty (31.3%) Officers reported that

they take quiet time to themselves, 32.8 percent (n = 21) reported that they do not. The remaining 35.9 percent (n = 23) were in the middle range.

Having Fun

Officers were asked whether or not they did something for fun at least once a week (question 17). Doing something for fun may also help reduce an individual's vulnerability to stress. The majority of respondents 59.4 percent (n = 38) indicated that they do something for fun at least once a week; 22 percent (n = 14) reported that they do not. The responses to this question seem to indicate that this is not a significant problem among Officers.

Time Management

The final variable that does not seem to contribute to an Officers vulnerability to stress is time management. Individuals who are unable to manage their time effectively are generally more vulnerable to stress. Officers were asked if they were able to organize their time effectively (question 18). This did not seem to be a significant problem among the Officers who responded to the survey. Over half (n = 34, 53.9%) of the Officers indicated that they are able to organize their time effectively; only 12.7% (n = 8) reported that they were not.

Factors that Contribute to Stress Vulnerability Among Corrections Officers

Caffeine Intake

Question 19 asked Officers if they drink fewer than 3 cups of coffee, tea, or cola drinks a day. Of all the variables related to diet and stress vulnerability, caffeine intake seems to be the most significant. Thirty-two (50%) of the Officers indicated that they drink more than three cups of coffee, tea, or cola drinks a day, 32 percent (n = 21) indicated that they did not.

Rest

Lack of adequate rest also seems to be a significant variable in increasing vulnerability scores among Correctional Officers. Question 2 asked Officers if they get seven to eight hours of sleep at least four nights a week. Thirty-one (48.5%) of the Officers reported that they do not get seven to eight hours of sleep at least four nights a week; 44.8 percent (n = 28) indicated that they do get adequate sleep.

Exercise

Lack of exercise seems to be a problem among Officers as well. Officers were asked (question 5) if they exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week. Twenty-six (40.7%) of the respondents indicated that they do not exercise regularly; 35.9% (n = 23) reported that they do,

Smoking

Smoking seems to be the most significant variable to increase an Officer's vulnerability to stress. Thirty-six (57.2%) of the Officers surveyed indicated that they smoke more than half a pack of cigarettes a day; 38.1% (n = 24) indicated that they do not. One Officer did not respond to this question.

Social Activities

Participation in social activities may also help an individual reduce their vulnerability to stress. Question 11 addressed this variable by asking Officers if they regularly attend club or social activities. Thirty-one (49.2%) of the Officers reported that they do not regularly attend club or social activities; only 18.6 percent (n = 13) indicated that they do. These statistics seem to indicate that a lack of social activities may be a significant factor in increasing an Officer's vulnerability to stress.

Summary

After reviewing the data presented, it is concluded that Correctional Officers at Grafton Correctional Institution suffer high levels of stress. The possible causes of this stress among the Correctional Officers are variables such as: shift, over consumption of caffeine, lack of adequate rest, lack of exercise, smoking, lack of social activities, and poor relationships with co-workers. Individuals who work the 3rd shift in the facility are the most vulnerable to stress. They lack proper sleep, exercise, smoke, and have little discussion time with family members. Officers who have Type A personalities are also very susceptible to stress.

The next chapter will discuss possible ways that Officers and Prison Managers can utilize this information to reduce stress in the workplace. It also offers suggestions for future research on the topic of stress among Correctional Officers to help reduce this problem on a more national level.

Chapter 5

Discussion

It is clear that the job of a Correctional Officer is a very stressful one. Studies have shown that they generally do not live as long as individuals who work in other occupations. The purpose of this research has been to determine what factors make Officers vulnerable to stress.

It appears that some fundamental lifestyle changes may help Officers cope with stress more effectively. This study has found that Officers generally drink too much caffeine, do not get adequate rest, smoke, do not exercise regularly, and do not participate in social activities. These variables all contribute to poor health and an increased vulnerability to stress. Another indicator that a person is susceptible to stress is personality type; individuals with Type B personalities are more stressed than individuals with Type A personalities. Finally, Officers reported that their strongest sources of stress are not related to the inmate population or physical environment of the institution, but are directly the result of interpersonal conflicts with other staff members. It is very unfortunate that Officers who are working with the most dangerous and manipulative individuals of society are experiencing the greatest amount of stress from their coworkers.

What can be done to eliminate these problems? Creating a positive work environment must become a priority for prison administrators. This may be accomplished by giving Officers a forum to voice their concerns. Perhaps a movement away from the traditional para-military management style would be beneficial. Officers

could be more involved in the decision making process, especial those decisions that directly effects their jobs. Participation in these decisions will increase their job satisfaction and reduce stress.

Conflicts among Officers seem to be a significant problem that is very difficult to resolve. Proper training on departmental and institutional policies may help eliminate conflicts directly pertaining to the Officers' jobs, but personal differences will always be a problem no matter where an individual works. Some strategies to help reduce personal conflicts is to create a positive work environment and provide training in areas such as cultural diversity, and sexual harassment. Providing opportunities for social bonding can also help reduce personal conflicts. With this training and these social activities, it is hoped that employees will learn to accept the differences of others.

Correctional Administrators must educate their employees and provide them with the resources necessary to deal with the problems of stress more effectively. As discussed above, variables such as smoking, poor diet, lack of adequate rest and lack of exercise are all contributing to high stress levels of Officers, and are ultimately impacting the overall operation of our nation's Correctional Institutions. More intensive stress management programs need to be developed which address the individual's role on stress vulnerability. For example, exercise is very beneficial for reducing stress and preventing certain ailments. Administrators can encourage Officers to participate in exercise programs. This can be accomplished by incorporating a fitness center at the institution. If this does not fit into the institution's budget, it may be feasible to set aside time in the recreation area for employees to utilize that equipment. Possible financial awards could

be given to officers who maintain optimal physical levels. Although this may be a cost on the forefront, monies could be saved on health cost in the future.

Smoking is another problem area that needs to be addressed. Many Officers may be willing to quit smoking but need help accomplishing this goal. Literature and other sources of information should be provided to Officers on the dangers of smoking and how it contributes to higher stress levels. Information could also be provided on where smoking cessation classes are held and financial assistance could be provided. Again, the money spent on prevention programs would pay for itself over time because it would reduce future health care costs.

Shift work is often a significant stressor for Officers. Many Officers who participated in this study indicated that they do not get adequate rest. Third shift Officers had the highest vulnerability scores and shift seems to be the main reason for this finding. There are positive ways for individuals to cope with shift work. For example, Cornelius (1994) offers the following suggestions to Officers working third shift. She states that individuals who work the night shift should make their sleeping environment as normal as possible. This can be accomplished by darkening the room as much as possible and putting in ear plugs to block out daytime noises. She also suggests that individuals make the room as bright as possible when they wake up. These simple techniques allow the body to fall into a normal sleeping pattern enabling individuals to get adequate sleep. Information such as this should be shared with Officers to help them cope with shift work more effectively.

More time and resources need to be expended to eliminate the problem of stress among Corrections Officers. The suggestions discussed in the previous paragraphs are

possible ways to start combating this problem. The “if you can’t take the heat get out of the kitchen” approach currently used is not an appropriate way to address this problem. Running away from a problem is not a viable solution; it will be there when you return, if you return.

Limitations of the Study:

This research project dealt specifically with Correctional Officers working in a medium/minimum security level facility. They also worked exclusively with male inmates. This results would have been more generalizable to all Correctional Officers had all security levels been evaluated and female facilities studied. Another limitation was the use of the Miller and Smith stress test instrument. Although it provides information about stress, it is limited in the data available. For example, it does not indicate the level and frequency of smoking thus limiting the information provided. Finally, this is a self-report instrument. It will be only as accurate as the person completing the instrument.

Future Research:

Future research is needed on many aspects of stress in the field of Corrections. This research has addressed the variables that make Officers vulnerable to stress. In addition, it has examined several demographic factors to determine which Officers are more vulnerable to stress. Future research could address a variety of variables that were not discussed. For example, race was one characteristic of Officers that was not

examined. A study, which included the race of the individual Officers, would enable researchers to determine if one race is more or less vulnerable to stress than another.

Future research could also examine the levels of stress among Officers in state systems, private systems, and federal systems to determine which system is dealing with the problem most effectively. This research could be shared with those employees responsible for training our nation's Correctional Officers to help reduce this problem on a national level. Studies could also be conducted to determine what types of stress management training programs that are being used in each system. This information could be used to develop an extensive stress management program for Correctional employees.

Prison administrators can provide the education and resources, but it is the responsibility of the individual employees to use what they have learned. My personal experience as a Correctional Officer with the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction has given me first hand experience with stress and how it effects Officers. I know now because of this research, that this is a problem that needs more attention from all parties involved.

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Appendix A

Survey Instrument: How Vulnerable are You to Stress?

HOW VULNERABLE ARE YOU TO STRESS?

Please answer the following questions before completing the survey.

Age : _____

Gender: M or F

Years of Service: _____

Marital Status: Married Single Divorced/Separated

Shift: 1st Spec. Duty 2nd 3rd How long have you been on present shift? _____

Previous Shift: 1st Spec. Duty 2nd 3rd How long on that shift? _____

Have you worked at any other state institutions? Yes No If yes, how many? _____

How would you describe your relationship with supervisors? Positive Negative

How would you describe your personality? Assertive Laid back (Passive)

What do you think is the primary purpose of prisons? (Circle Below)

Rehabilitation

Incapacitation

Punishment

Deterrence

What is your strongest source of stress? _____

Lyle H. Miller and Alma Dell Smith, psychologists at Boston University Medical Center, developed the following test. For each statement, circle the number that indicates how much time that statement applies to you.

	Almost Always				Never
1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I get 7 to 8 hours of sleep at least 4 nights a week.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I give and receive affection regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely on.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I smoke less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I take fewer than 5 alcoholic drinks a week.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am appropriate weight for my height.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I get strength from my religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I regularly attend club or social activities.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.	1	2	3	4	5

14. I am in good health (including eyesight, hearing, teeth).	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I have regular conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems, e.g., chores money and daily living issues.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I do something for fun at least once a week.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I am able to organize my time effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I drink fewer than three cups of coffee, tea, or or cola drinks a day.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I take quiet time for myself during the day.	1	2	3	4	5

Subtotal _____

(Optional) You do not need to } Subtotal minus 20 = Total Vulnerability Score _____
complete this.

To get your final score, add up the figures and subtract 20. Any score over 30 indicates a vulnerability to stress. You are seriously vulnerable if your score is between 50 and 75, and extremely vulnerable if it is over 75.

Appendix B

Human Subjects Approval: Department of Rehabilitation and Correction



Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

1050 Freeway Drive North
Columbus, Ohio 43229

ft, Governor

www.drc.state.oh.us

Reginald A. Wilkinson, Director

August 22, 2000

Bradley T. Fabian
Case Manager
Grafton Correctional Institution

Mr. Fabian:

Enclosed is a copy of the signed Research Proposal Approval form for your proposal titled "Vulnerability Factors That Lead to Stress and Strain Among Corrections Officers".

Good luck with your study. As agreed, **we expect to receive a copy of the study once it is completed.** Please contact me by phone at 614-728-1180, by fax at 614-728-1033, or by e-mail at lee.norton@drc.state.oh.us, should you have questions.

Sincerely,

Lee Norton, Chair
Human Subjects Research Review Committee

ln/pjm
cc: committee members

RESEARCH PROPOSAL APPROVAL

Proposal Title: Vulnerability Factors That Lead to Stress and Strain Among Corrections Officers

The individual submitting this research proposal has read and agrees to the conditions specified on the second page of this approval form.

Submitted by: Bradley T. Fabian
(Name)

Youngstown State University, Youngstown, OH 44555
(Address)

330/742-3279
(Telephone Number)

Date Submitted: June 12, 2000

Advisor: *James A. King* Department Chairperson
(Signature and Title)

Youngstown State University, Criminal Justice Department
(Academic Institution)

Department of Rehabilitation and Correction:

Lee Horton
Research Review - Central Office

8/2/00
Date

M. Black
Deputy Director, Office of Policy

8/7/00
Date

Carl A. Anderson
Managing Officer/Field Supervisor

8-15-00
Date

Appendix C

Human Subjects Review



Youngstown State University / One University Plaza / Youngstown, Ohio 44555-0001

June 12, 2000

Dr. Tamara A. King, Principal Investigator
Mr. Brad Fabian, Co-Investigator
Department of Criminal Justice
Youngstown State University
2092 Cushwa Hall
CAMPUS

RE: HSRC Protocol #127-00

Dear Dr. King and Mr. Fabian:

I am writing to notify you of the action taken at the regular meeting of the Youngstown State University Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC) on June 9, 2000 with respect to the above referenced protocol. Following review and discussion, the Committee approved the study, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) that the investigators provide a written statement describing the physical setting and circumstances under which subjects will be solicited, as well as the means of solicitation (e.g., written instructions, approximate script). The solicitation/ instructions should contain all of the elements of informed consent and *invite* potential subject participation, so as to eliminate any prospect of coercion;
- (2) that the investigators provide subjects with appropriate professional referral information to address any residual discomfort as a function of subject participation.

Please provide this information to the HSRC, in care of Ms. Cheryl Coy in the Grants Office, at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your cooperation and best wishes for the success of your study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric C. Lewandowski'.

Eric C. Lewandowski, CRA
Administrative Co-Chair

ECL/

Appendix D

Authorization from the Warden of Grafton Correctional Institution



Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

GRAFTON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
2500 S. Avon-Beldon Road
Grafton, Ohio 44044

ft, Governor

www.drc.state.oh.us

Reginald A. Wilkinson, Director

TO: ALL CONCERNED

FROM: CARL S. ANDERSON, WARDEN
GRAFTON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

RE: THESIS PROJECT OF BRAD FABIAN

DATE: 5-26-00

I authorize Brad Fabian to administer an anonymous survey to Corrections Officers at Grafton Correctional Institution. I am aware that the survey is being conducted as part of a research project (thesis) on the topic of job stress among Corrections Officers and that there is no risk to employees who choose to participate in the study.

Sincerely,

Carl S. Anderson

Appendix E

**Informational Packets distributed to Officers with the Survey Instrument
(Source: Ohio's Employee Assistance Program)**

STRESS

DEFINITION:

An applied force or system of forces that tends to strain or deform a body, measured by the force acting per unit area.

Physics.

A mentally or emotionally disruptive or disquieting influence; a state of tension or distress caused by such an influence.

TYPES OF STRESS:

General Stress

- * everyone has it
- * necessary for life
- * usually positive
- * becomes negative if perceived as such
- * it is not bad unless it becomes excessive or prolonged
- * it can lead to cumulative stress

CUMULATIVE

- * a chronic state of disturbing stress which can cause physical and emotional illness and changes in personality over time.

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS

- * also called “traumatic stress”
- * not caused by general stress or cumulative stress but produced by a specific terrible event
- * all people are vulnerable
- * some may react more strongly than others
- * usually resolves in a reasonable period of time
- * may need debriefing or some other brief support services
- * can turn into a serious problem for a few people if it is not resolved
- * good supervisors should be able to recognize the problem
- * good supervisors should call for appropriate help from a CISM team when necessary
- * good supervisors should know the signals that CISM help is necessary

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

- * small percentage of population develop PTSD if critical incident stress is not properly resolved
- * good supervisors can recognize the early sign that critical incident stress is not being resolved

PTSD (cont.)

- * supervisors should refer individuals for professional assistance if symptoms of critical incident stress do not resolve in a reasonable time frame
- * signs of unresolved critical incident stress include:
 - continued stress symptoms despite time passage or the fact that help has already been given
 - intensifying stress symptoms despite time passage or help given
 - intrusive images (dreams or flashbacks)
 - emotional numbing
 - fear of repetition of the event
 - hyper startle response
 - loss of interest in usually enjoyable tasks
 - depression
 - intensified anxiety
 - emotional outbursts
 - withdrawal from others
 - memory dysfunction
 - other significant signs

BURNOUT

Cumulative, constant, chronic stress which erodes one's coping mechanisms and which results from repeating, non-traumatic stress

THERAPEUTIC ACTIVITIES FOR STRESS REDUCTION

GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITY – ANGER, ANXIETY, FRUSTRATION

Racquetball, handball, basketball, tennis
Yard work such as raking, hoeing, chopping/sawing wood
House work such as vacuuming, sweeping, scrubbing floors
Running, sparring, fast-paced walking
Swimming

CALMING ACTIVITY – OVERLOADED, CONFUSED, PRESSURED

Yard work such as weeding, gardening
Handwork such as woodworking, sanding, needlework
Listening to soothing music
Reading
Meditation
Slow-paced walking, sauntering, especially in a park
Watching nature or relaxing videos

WHEN EXHAUSTED – OVERLOADED, CONFUSED, PRESSURED

Yoga, stretching exercises, slow movements
Relaxing, soothing, long bath
Movie
Use of scents (candles) and herbs (tea – try camomile)
Reading light material
Water aerobics

DON'TS

Channel surf
Increase alcoholic beverages / do increase water consumption
Increase use of medications or drugs
Increase or decrease normal food intake; eat nutritional food
Increase or decrease your normal sexual activity
Isolate from family and friends

DO'S

See the humor in things, smile, laugh
Allow yourself solitude
Learn to say “no” when you are over-loaded

Appendix F

Strongest Sources of Stress Responses

What is your strongest source of stress?

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
Valid				
No Response	4	6.3	6.3	6.3
Administration	1	1.6	1.6	7.8
Always Think Positive	1	1.6	1.6	9.4
Balancing school/work	1	1.6	1.6	10.9
Bills	1	1.6	1.6	12.5
Children	1	1.6	1.6	14.1
Coworkers	1	1.6	1.6	15.6
Cumulative	1	1.6	1.6	17.2
Driving to/from work	1	1.6	1.6	18.8
Ex-husband	1	1.6	1.6	20.3
Family	1	1.6	1.6	21.9
Finances	1	1.6	1.6	23.4
Food service	1	1.6	1.6	25.0
Front office	1	1.6	1.6	26.6
General	1	1.6	1.6	28.1
General ?	1	1.6	1.6	29.7
Getting up early	1	1.6	1.6	31.3
Illness of someone close	1	1.6	1.6	32.8
Inconsistency	1	1.6	1.6	34.4
Job/family	1	1.6	1.6	35.9
Lack of teamwork	1	1.6	1.6	37.5
Lack of time	1	1.6	1.6	39.1
Management	1	1.6	1.6	45.3
Management/racist practice	1	1.6	1.6	46.9
Mental	1	1.6	1.6	48.4
Money	1	1.6	1.6	50.0
Motherhood	1	1.6	1.6	51.6
Neg. professionalism of Supervisors	1	1.6	1.6	53.1
Neg. work environment/ Relationships	1	1.6	1.6	54.7
Other staff	2	3.1	3.1	57.8
Other staff/administration	1	1.6	1.6	59.4
Post traumatic stress Disorder	1	1.6	1.6	60.9
Pressure	1	1.6	1.6	62.5
Relationships	1	1.6	1.6	64.1
Road rage	1	1.6	1.6	65.6
School	1	1.6	1.6	67.2
Staff	10	15.6	15.6	82.8
Staff/supervisors	1	1.6	1.6	84.4
Supervisors	2	3.1	3.1	87.5
Wife	2	3.1	3.1	90.6
Work	5	7.8	7.8	98.4
Work and home	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	64	100.0	100.0	