

Policy, Wellbeing and Lifestyles of Police

Dipali Tripathi

Abstract:- Public security and Law enforcement professionals play a vital role in maintaining public safety and security. However, the nature of police work often exposes officers to high levels of stress, which can impact their overall wellbeing and lifestyle choices. In pubmed, webMD, journal of criminal justice, and from various other sites, I had read 11 records, from which 8 studies are eligible for the review.

This literature review aims to investigate the relationship between policy, wellbeing, and lifestyles of police officers by examining relevant research and studies in the field. The review includes data from 103 police officers in a large police agency in New York State, analyzing sources of police stress. The participants represented a 93 percent response rate, and surveys were distributed through interdepartmental mail with voluntary participation and protected confidentiality.

The analysis of the data revealed that killing someone in the line of duty ranked as the highest stressor for police officers. Police officers with 6-10 years of experience reported the highest overall combined stressor mean score. Desk sergeants ranked organizational factors as the most intense stressors. Additionally, officers aged 31-35 reported shift work as the most intense stressor, while black police officers reported inadequate support from the department as the most stressful factor. These findings suggest the need for intervention strategies to address organizational stress in police management. The literature review also explores various areas of discussion related to police officers' wellbeing and lifestyles. These areas include incorporating police trauma into a life-career course perspective, the changing context and nature of police work, recruitment, selection, and socialization in the context of critical incident and terrorist work, changing gender balance, training in uncertain times, managing risk and vulnerability, organizational context, family dynamics, inter- and intra-organizational teams, health and mental health, consequences of long-term exposure to hazards, and disengagement and retirement.

The purpose of the Buffalo Cardio-Metabolic Occupational Police Stress (BCOPS) study is to integrate psychological, physiological, and subclinical measures of stress, disease, and mental dysfunction. The study involved a stratified sample of 100 officers randomly selected from the Buffalo, NY Police Department. Various measurements and self-report measures were obtained to assess stress biomarkers, cardiovascular health, body composition, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The results showed that police officers had slightly lower flow-mediated dilation (FMD) and carotid intima-media thickness (IMT), elevated body mass index (BMI), and higher rates of depression and PTSD compared to populations of similar age. These

findings highlight the importance of addressing the physical and mental health of police officers.

The report also emphasizes the need to eliminate stigma surrounding mental health and other barriers to help-seeking among law enforcement personnel. It suggests facilitating positive perceptions surrounding mental health, improving trust and confidence in services, and reducing apprehension associated with utilizing behavioral health services.

The use of a strategic communications plan, expanding the network of qualified mental health professionals (QMHPs), and providing opportunities for self-care and accessing services during work hours are recommended. The report further emphasizes the importance of demonstrating leadership, prioritizing psychological health and well-being, and utilizing policy to advance health and well-being in law enforcement agencies.

Sleep deprivation and disruption, which are common in law enforcement occupations, can contribute to fatigue, disruptions in sleep patterns and circadian rhythms, sleep conditions, mental health conditions, and cardiovascular disease. Substance use and misuse, particularly alcohol use, have been identified as coping strategies for stress and trauma-related symptoms among police officers. Substance and alcohol misuse have also been linked to suicide ideation and death by suicide in law enforcement personnel. Therefore, it is crucial to address factors that negatively impact sleep, as well as social and occupational factors contributing to substance use and misuse among police officers.

Highlighted practices for fostering a culture of wellness within law enforcement agencies include using research to inform education and training standards, institutionalizing training throughout an officer's career, providing fitness-related equipment, offering health and cardiac screening services, enhancing conflict management and de-escalation skills, educating personnel about mental health and providing self-care practices, and utilizing peer support and evidence-based interventions.

Various federal agencies, including the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), and National Institute of Corrections (NIC), have developed programs and resources to support the mental health and wellness of law enforcement personnel. These initiatives focus on providing training, technical assistance, resources, and funding for wellness programs, peer support, suicide prevention, and trauma-informed approaches.

Keywords:- Police, law enforcement, policy, wellbeing, wellness, mental health, occupational health, work –life balance, job satisfaction, stress management, lifestyle, exercise, sleep, support systems, employee assistance programs.

I. INTRODUCTION

The topic "**Policy, wellbeing, and lifestyle of police**" focuses on examining the impact of policies on the overall wellbeing and lifestyle of police officers. It involves exploring the various policies implemented within law enforcement organizations and their effects on the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of police personnel.

The term "**policy**" refers to the set of rules, regulations, guidelines, and procedures established by law enforcement agencies to govern their operations, practices, and interactions with the community. These policies can cover areas such as use of force, community policing, diversity and inclusion, training and development, and officer wellness programs.

"**Wellbeing**" refers to the state of being healthy, satisfied, and fulfilled in various aspects of life. In the context of police officers, it encompasses their physical health, mental health, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and overall quality of life. Examining the wellbeing of police officers involves assessing factors such as stress levels, job demands, social support, access to healthcare, and coping mechanisms.

"**Lifestyle**" refers to the way of living of individuals, including their daily routines, habits, behaviors, and choices. In the case of police officers, their lifestyle may be influenced by the nature of their work, including irregular shifts, high-stress situations, and exposure to trauma. Understanding the lifestyle of police officers involves studying their sleep patterns, exercise habits, nutrition, substance use, leisure activities, and the impact of their work on their personal lives and relationships.

There are some problems are coming during implementation of any wellbeing policy for police –

- **Resistance to change:** Introducing a new policy may be met with resistance from both police officers and higher-ranking officials. Some officers may be skeptical about the benefits of a wellbeing policy or perceive it as a distraction from their primary duties.
- **Lack of awareness and education:** Officers may not fully understand the importance of prioritizing their mental and physical wellbeing, or they may lack knowledge about the specific elements and resources available through the policy. This can hinder their engagement and willingness to participate.

- **Limited resources:** Implementing a comprehensive wellbeing policy requires allocating resources such as funding, personnel, training, and facilities. Police departments may face budget constraints or struggle to secure the necessary resources to support the policy effectively.
- **Stigma and culture:** Law enforcement agencies often have a strong culture of toughness and resilience. Mental health issues or seeking help may be stigmatized within the police culture, which can discourage officers from seeking support or engaging with wellbeing initiatives.
- **Organizational structure and hierarchy:** Hierarchical structures within police departments can pose challenges to the implementation of a wellbeing policy. It may be necessary to obtain buy-in and support from leaders at various levels, which can be time-consuming and challenging.
- **Time constraints and workload:** Policing is a demanding profession, often characterized by long shifts, irregular hours, and high-stress situations.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine existing policies and regulations related to the wellbeing and lifestyle of police officers.
- To assess the impact of policy interventions on the wellbeing and lifestyle of police personnel.
- To identify factors influencing the wellbeing and lifestyle of police officers, such as job-related stress, work-life balance, and social support etc.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Search strategy

- I started searching the literature on 10th July 2023.
- The current scoping review adopted an 5 stages methodological framework, comprising of the following steps-
 - Identification of research questions
 - Identifications of relevant research articles
 - Study selections
 - Charting the data
 - Collating, reporting, and summarizing the findings.

I have selected important points using the **PRISMA** (reporting preferred items for systematic reviews and meta-analysis), technique from sources such as PubMed, webMD, Journal of criminal justice e.t.c, in order to write a literature review.

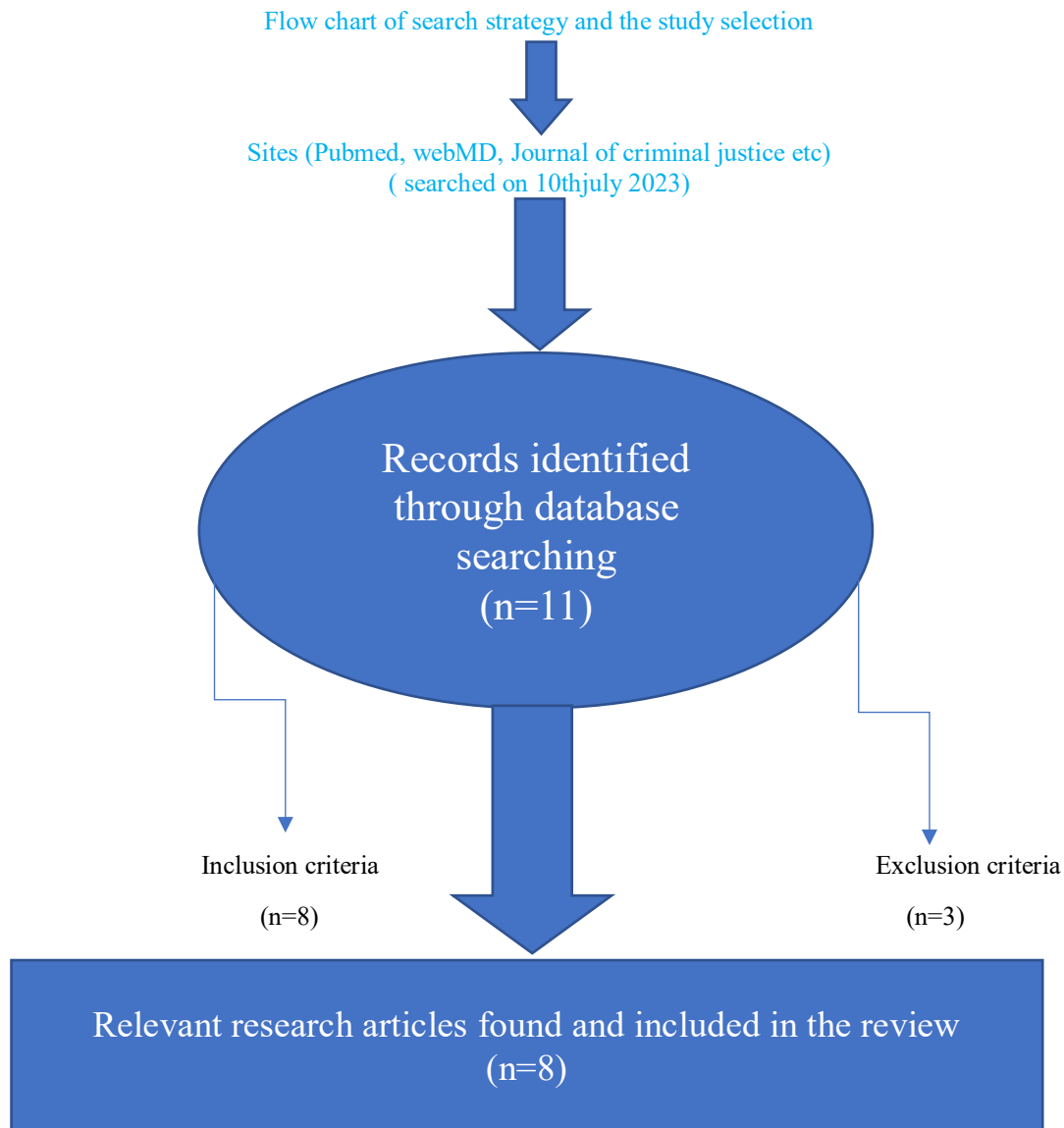


Fig. 1: Flowchart

B. Study eligibility criteria

For writing the literature review, I utilized the inclusion and exclusion criteria. I read 11 articles, out of which 8 were found to be relevant. However, the remaining 3 articles did not provide the scientific points, I needed for my literature review, as they focused on social control rather than the well-being of the police.

C. Data extraction

To conduct a systematic and accurate extraction of data, I am independently conducted the process.

D. Data synthesis

Following variables to be included in the final analysis

➤ Time of survey-

Informations gathered on the date, from 10 th July 2023 to 13th July 2023.

➤ Study objectives-

- To examine the existing literature on the impact of policy implementation on the wellbeing of police officers.

- Analyze studies that explore the association between policy-related factors and lifestyle issues, such as sleep quality, stress levels, physical activity, and diet among police officers.

➤ Sample size

A health checkup was conducted on 103 police officers in New York to assess their lifestyle and identify any health conditions they may be experiencing due to their job. The objective was to gather information that would help formulate policies aimed at improving their health. By understanding the specific health issues faced by police officers, policy recommendations can be developed to enhance their well-being.

➤ Limitations

Limitations of each study were assessed so that areas of further research were identified.

➤ Results

I have read 11 literatures from 10th July 2023 to 13th July 2023. Out of those, I have included 8 literatures and excluded 3 for my literature review writing.

IV. CONCLUSION

- This scoping literature review provides insights into the relationship between policy, wellbeing, and lifestyles of police officers. It highlights the need for intervention strategies to address organizational stress, promote mental and physical health, and support the overall well-being of law enforcement personnel.
- The review also identifies existing federal resources and investments required to advance agency wellness efforts. By implementing the suggested practices and utilizing available resources, law enforcement agencies can foster a culture of wellness and enhance the psychological health and well-being of their personnel.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Ashish joshi sir, conceptualized the research paper and contributed to manuscript writing, and I Dipali Tripathi, contributed in drafting of paper, data gathering, manuscript writing, data analysis, and interpretation and critical editing.

REFERENCES

- [1.] Article: Violanti, J. M., & Aron, F. (1994). Sources of police stressors, job attitudes and psychological distress. *Psychological Reports*, 75(2), 827-835.
- [2.] Article: Violanti, J. M., & Aron, F. (1995). Police stressors: Variations in perception among police personnel. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 23(3), 287-297.
- [3.] Article: Paton, D., & Violanti, J. M. (2000). Traumatic stress in police officers: A career-length assessment from recruitment to retirement. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 13(4), 495-504.
- [4.] Article: Violanti, J. M., Burchfiel, C. M., Miller, D. B., & Andrew, M. E. (2006). The Buffalo Cardio-Metabolic Occupational Police Stress (BCOPS) pilot study: methods and participant characteristics. *Annals of Epidemiology*, 16(2), 148-156.
- [5.] Book: Territo, L., & Sewell, J. D. (2011). *Stress and policing: Sources and strategies*. Prentice Hall.
- [6.] Government Report: National Institute of Justice. (2018). *Advancing Science to Reduce Impacts of Policing on the Health and Well-being of Communities*. Retrieved from <https://www.nij.gov/topics/law-enforcement/well-being/research/Pages/advancing-science-to-reduce-impacts-of-policing.aspx>
- [7.] Website: Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). (n.d.). *Officer Wellness and Resilience*. Retrieved from <https://www.policeforum.org/officer-wellness-and-resilience>
- [8.] Website: International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). (n.d.). *Center for Officer Safety and Wellness*. Retrieved from <https://www.theiacp.org/projects/center-for-officer-safety-and-wellnes>