

## Acknowledgment and health in police officers

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The way colleagues and supervisors acknowledge specific contribution and efforts of individuals is crucial for occupational mental health and well being. It contributes to improve the self image of employees and it gives a sense to the activities performed. We carried out a study about occupational health in police officers with a special emphasis on acknowledgment and reward.

A questionnaire was sent to 1000 police officers working for a cantonal administration in Switzerland. In total, 695 participants answered the questionnaire. We used the French version of the Langner's questionnaire on psychiatric symptoms to identify cases characterized by potential mental health problems. Multiple choice items (6 modalities ranging from "not at all" to "tremendously") to measure acknowledgment were used. Answers were later dichotomized (low annoyance- high annoyance). Questions we used are: "Do you feel annoyed due to a lack of support and attention from your supervisors?" "Do you feel annoyed because the authorities (politics, judges, etc.) have a low consideration of your occupation?" "Do you feel annoyed due to a low appreciation by the public?" and "Do you feel annoyed due to a lack of acknowledgment by the hierarchy?".

The score for psychiatric symptoms was high for 86 police officers for whom health might be at risk. Acknowledgment aspects associated with a high score for psychiatric symptoms are : high annoyance due to a lack of support and attention from supervisors (odds ratio [OR] 3.2, 95% confidence interval [CI] 2.0 to 5.1), high annoyance because authorities seems to have a low consideration for police officers (OR 2.7, 95% CI 1.7 to 4.3), high annoyance due to a low appreciation by the public (OR 1.8, 95% CI 1.2 to 2.9), and high annoyance due to a lack of acknowledgment by the hierarchy (OR 3.0, 95% CI 1.9 to 4.8).

Preserving mental health in occupations characterized by high emotional demand is challenging. The results from our study suggest that appropriate acknowledgment might contribute to the prevention of mental health problems. Further research should address a potential causal relation of acknowledgment on mental health.



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