

Stress and the Effects of Working
in a High Security Prison
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Abstract

This study examines the stress and effects thereof on the correctional officer and worker in some of America's high security prisons. As we all know, prison is a community of violence subjugated behind the walls of various correctional institutions around the country. Through manipulation and violence, criminal offenders try to make their stay in many of America's High Security prisons more congenial. With a blatant disregard for the correctional worker and correctional officer, the violence, confrontation and belligerence exerted by the inmate population ultimately affects the daily work and personal lives of these dedicated and basically unknown law enforcement professionals, known as correctional officers and workers. The following research design will examine the effects that working in this dangerous subculture has on the correctional worker and officer, their personal and professional lives.

INTRODUCTION

The correctional environment is one plagued with confrontation, violence and diseases. According to Aziz, Levine, Sieber, Schulte, & Steenland's, (1997) study of New York state Correctional officers who were exposed to Tuberculosis "... Approximately 33% of new cases in 1992 among New York State Prison employees were due to occupational exposure"(pg.2013).

The prison subculture is one of distrust and broken rules. This subculture is a street like mentality subjugated to the particular prison gang or affiliation that an inmate might belong to when incarcerated. Prison life is mainly looked at through the eyes of the prisoner or the violence that this forgotten portion of the American population goes through once subjected to the rigors of these violent and dangerous subcultures.

High security prisons are on the rise in the United States. Briggs, Castellano, & Sundt explain that "Supermax prisons have been advanced as means of controlling the "worst of the worst" and making prisons safer places to live and work"(2006). According to the Bureau of Prisons website (2007), the Federal Bureau of Prisons currently has twenty-one (21) High security prisons. Each prison employs approximately Three-hundred (300) Correctional workers. This is a total of approximately sixty-

three hundred (6300) Correctional workers (the numbers vary due to retention, retirement, and promotions).

Most can conceptualize that working in a high security prison is stressful and can affect those who work in such a setting. Lindquist and Whitehead explained it best when they wrote "Correctional officers are as much imprisoned as their captives and a very real pain of that imprisonment is interaction with less than desirable persons" (1986). But, how does working in such a violent subculture day after day affect the correctional worker and officer¹? What effects does this environment have on the correctional workers' career, home life, marriage and other social and personal interactions with family and friends outside the confines of the institutional walls?

Many in academia have written on the subject of correctional officers and stress (Cheek, 1984, Cheek & Miller 1982, Lindquist & Whitehead 1986, Lambert 2001). Early researchers have written that as the average person lives to be 75 years old, the life expectancy of a correctional worker is only 59 years old (Cheek, 1984). This is an alarming statistic.

Prison life for many inmates is filled with violence, manipulation, sexual assault, gangs and indoctrination into a genesis of a new criminal world. According to Kawucha, Marquart

¹ The correctional officer is concerned with safety and security, the correctional worker are those treatment and support staff that have jobs that are outside the parameters of just maintaining safety and security.

& Trulson, "Gangs and security threat groups are primarily aligned along race and ethnicity. The racial and ethnic divide endorsed by most prison and street gangs means that race has been and continues to be one of the most dominant influences on inmate behavior"(2006, pg. 27).

But what is prison life like for the correctional officer? For the correctional officer prison life is filled with confrontation, mendaciousness and force. To be challenged mentally and physically and to have your integrity tested is an event that reoccurs over and over for the correctional officer. Over time the pressure of the prison subculture takes over and can affect the correctional officer².

Some officers have a good handle on the profession and a strong internal locus of control to afford them the ability to control their own stress and life events. On the other end of the spectrum are those who have an external locus of control which allows events and their environment like the prison subculture to control their ability to cope with stress (Robbins, 2005).

The prison subculture in a high security prison is violent, deadly, repressive and manipulative. Even those in prison who are low custody or first time offenders run the risk of being entrapped in the prison subculture. According to Agnew and

² This is an observation of the author, who has experience working in a high security prison.

Cullen (2003) "The probability that persons will engage in criminal and deviant behavior is increased and the probability of their conforming to the norms decreased when they differentially associate with others who commit criminal behavior" (pg. 143). The Deviant behavior that Agnew and Cullen wrote about is abundant behind the walls of our nation's penal institutions.

From shift to shift the correctional officer is tasked with policing this violent subculture. Being subjected to this violent subculture on a daily basis is a stressor in the career and life of a correctional officer. These stressors can cause the correctional officer to experience more health issues, have a shorter life span and on average die at an earlier age than the average worker. (Lambert, 2001)

Stress is not only harmful to the stressed officer or correctional worker but is also onerous to the profession and to the lives of others working in the institution. Cheek wrote that "Burned-out officers frequently loose interest in their jobs, become passive instead of active in carrying them out, and let things go. Thus harmful incidents may occur that could have been avoided if handled properly from the beginning" (1984).

Stress is not always a direct association of the inmate population. Other byproducts of the profession can cause stress and impair functioning of the correctional officer. Shift Lag is

one of these byproducts. Shift Lag is when the stress and physiological fatigue of shift work causes one to become peevish, experience impaired performance, and a feeling of being soporific both on the job and in personal affairs (Pollock, 2005).

The pride that one takes in their career can lead to stress as well. Whiteacre (2006) reported in his study of the Salvation Army Correctional Services in Chicago that a cause for concern was that "54 percent of the respondents felt they were at a standstill in their career/job" (pg. 72).

Domestic affairs are not only the reciprocity of this stress, but can be the cause of stress as well. According to Pollack (2005) " Correctional officers frequently reported letting out tensions at the wrong place(at home), tightening discipline at home and spending less time at home on their days off"(pg. 213). This stress and misanthropic release might be influential in the fact that correctional officer divorce rate is two times the rate of other blue collar workers. (Pollock, 2005).

Work-Family conflict is three fold as it affects the correctional officers and his or her family. According to Barton, Hogan, & Lambert (2004):

Essentially, work-family conflict occurs when the two primary focuses in a person's life (i.e., work and

familial/social) are incompatible and, therefore, cause conflict that leads to spillovers into both the work and familial/social milieus. In the end, this leads to stress for the individual.

Correctional officer absenteeism from stress is another problem that has a direct correlation to stress and the prison environment. Work stress, poor work environment, age, gender and family responsibilities affect correctional officer absenteeism. The Shift variance can also adversely affect female absenteeism because of child care issues (Lambert, 2001).

The role of a correctional officer can cause confusion and stress, especially when coupled with the changing political landscape that can engulf this sometime punitive and other times rehabilitative occupation. ³ Pollock (2006) wrote "Role conflict could be defined as the struggle of officers to reconcile custodial responsibilities (which could include maintaining security through preventing escapes and inmate violence) with their treatment function (rehabilitation of offenders)" (pg. 209).

To better understand how stress affects the correctional officer and worker and his or her complex social relationships this research is going to use quantitative data, which will be

³ Provides supervision, care and correctional treatment of inmates. They are concerned with the maintenance of institution security contributing to the health and welfare of the inmates and the promotion of good public relations.

obtained through using a data set from a 2005 survey conducted by a large Correctional agency in the United States. This research will measure a deductive theory that working in a high security prison setting effects a correctional workers and correctional officer's performance on and off the job. As age and seniority increase so should the stress level of those working in a prison environment. It will also prove that working in a high security prison effects social relationships and interactions.

My measurable expectation is that the confines, stress and long term exposure to a violent prison subculture affects a correctional workers ability to perform his or her job and affects intricate parts of a correctional workers social life and complex relationships at home. This research will help explain the affects that come from working in such a high stress and violence plagued prison subculture.

This research will also further indicate that stress from working in a High Security Prison is not an autonomous psychological issue, that stress is a major product of the correctional occupation. This research will prove that stress in this environment should no longer be considered an individual problem, but part of the complexities of the occupation and not that of a weak officer. As some deal with stress in different ways the underlining problem is that this is a profession and an

agency problem that needs to be addressed to all and not relegated to self help programs like Employee Assistance Programs.

Information from this research can contribute in producing better training, preparation and resources for correctional workers and officers, both inside and outside the prisons environment. Through information gathered in this research, change can be implemented that agencies can eliminate or identify much of the stress and pressures that one incurs from working in a high security prison environment. This training in return can hopefully help the correctional worker and officer to better perform their duties and keep and maintain better relationships in his or her personal lives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many in academia have studied the complex societal microcosm called prison. Many have conducted research on the forgotten law enforcement professionals called the Correctional Officer. Something is to be said about the men and women who put on a duty belt and a set of keys and polices the most violent inhabitants of our society *unarmed*.

As academia has conjectured and researched such topics as recidivism, prison subculture and the effectiveness of various institutional programs, so have researchers studied the modern day correctional officer. Through research we have gather important information on how policing and working with violence has impinged on the correctional officers.

A researcher cannot research the issue of correctional officer stress without perusing the vast amounts of applicable research and information provided by one of the pioneers of correctional officer stress research from Dr. Frances E Cheek.

Cheek & Miller (1982) conducted research of correctional officers from state correctional agencies from the state of Pennsylvania, Illinois and Washington. With a response rate of 49%, Cheek & Miller went on to gain a wealth data on how stress from the correctional environment affected the officer personally and professionally. Their research reported that there was a 27% divorce rate among correctional officers in the

study, 39% had financial problems and 88% reported heart attacks. (p.21-22)

Stress

Whiteacre (2006) study on community corrections staff job satisfaction was conducted by surveying staff at the Salvation Army Correctional Services in Chicago. The survey was administered to staff at a monthly meeting, and participation was voluntary. Forty-five (45) surveys were returned, with a response rate of about 54%.

The survey was formatted very closely to the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Social climate survey. The BOP administers a climate survey each year to their employees. The research data found that most felt that their career was stagnant; this was at a rate of 54%. An increase in job stress due to dealing with the offenders with poor attitudes in the program was found as well.

Many respondents commented on how pleased they were to be able to provide feedback, even if it was only in a survey form. This allowed the research to deduct that there is an association among staff job satisfaction with being able to voice opinions and have a format to provide input into the organization.

Armstrong and Griffin (2004) used a "Quality of work life" survey to gather data from correctional staff, in ten state-prisons in a southwestern state. This survey was used to measure

the amount of stress as an aggregate in the daily work life of correctional officers and treatment staff.

The dependant variable (stress) was measured by using a Likert-type five (5) item scale. The independent variable of role problems was measured using a six-item scale. Five (5) environmental variables were found to influence job stress. Role problems exerted the most stress among treatment personal.

This research also found that stress compounded as length of service in the agency increased. As the ambiguity of the correctional officer job increased so did the stress that one experienced, it was deducted that agency and administrative decisions have a major impact on the stress level of staff. The findings in this research were not gender or racial specific.

Stress does not only affect the correctional officer personally, but more adversely affects his or her social and domestic affairs. Stress is also debilitating on the correctional agency through absenteeism. Absenteeism among correctional staff costs a correctional institution much needed manpower, consistency that is instilled in institutional environments, and through financial burdens on agency budgets because of overtime expenditures.

As research on this subject has developed, a greater influence has been placed by researchers away from autonomy of perceived stress and more emphasis on how the organization

creates an environment of stress and contention. With correctional staff turn over rates in 12-15% range researchers need to look to other areas of corrections than at officers and staff members themselves for stress and stress related issues.

Higgins & Tewksbury (2006) conducted research on the influence of emotional dissonance, organizational fairness and job feedback. Six hundred and fifty (650) surveys were administered to correctional staff at several Kentucky prisons with a 35% response rate. Higgins & Tewksbury (2006) wrote the following:

Not surprisingly, the results of this analysis show that work stress is primarily generated by organizational issues rather than time spent with inmates. Specifically, when the correctional staff has to "fake" the proper organizational response (i.e. emotional dissonance), the correctional staff experiences work stress.

The autonomous nature of corrections coupled with the loss of control over discretion and decision making causes stress. After some time the veteran correctional officer begins to realize that it is not the inmate population that is cause for concern as much as the stress of working in a bureaucratic, paramilitary structured organization. (Higgins & Tewksbury, 2006).

Lambert's (2001) research on absent correctional officers discusses the lack of research completed on the problems of correctional officer absenteeism. Lambert also discusses how work stress, poor work environment, age, gender and family responsibilities affect correctional officer absenteeism. Lambert purposed how the shift variance can affect female absenteeism because of child care issues.

As Lambert researched correctional officer absenteeism, there was an association to this phenomenon in other professions and societal margins as well. Lambert (2001) wrote that "In a recent survey, 42% of wealthy households, 41% of college-educated workers, and 43% of persons under 24 years of age admitted they pretended to be sick to avoid work". If other segments of the workforce are finding comfort in their own absenteeism, the affects from stressors related to institutionalized employment would make absenteeism an even more viable option.

Like others Lambert reported that the correctional officer has more health issues, have a shorter life span and on average dies earlier then the average worker, this is in agreement with research conducted by Cheek & Miller (1982) and Cheek (1984). Lambert also discussed some issues a researcher might encounter when attempting to research correctional officer absenteeism. Lambert commented on how many agencies do not disclose

information on employee absenteeism, because of privacy and other agency bureaucratic obstacles, Because of this the actual affect from stress on absenteeism is problematic.

Burnout

Stress in any occupation and life style, when administered in small doses can be healthy and productive. Stress can be a motivator for one to ameliorate problems at work and better deal with complex issues. It is when stress becomes over bearing and out of control that it becomes dangerous and can lead to a phenomenon called "burnout". Lindquist and Whitehead (1986) define Job burnout as "A syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do people work of some kind."

Keeping with the consensus among many correctional officer stress researchers, Morgan, Pearson, Van Haveren, (2002) found that most stress came not from the inmate population, but from the lack of support from prison administrators and recognition for a job well done. Most officers just feel that they are one step up from the inmate population, as correctional proletariats.

Depersonalizations and a sense of achievement is a perquisite that is lacking in many correctional environments for correctional officers. Morgan, Pearson, Van Haveren conducted research at a Southwestern state department of corrections.

Eight hundred (800) surveys were administered with a 31% response rate. The researchers found that gender as a univariate analysis concluded that male correctional officers reported more depersonalization than female correctional officers.

As with other research racial disparities did not have an impact on the level of correctional officer burnout. To further substantiate other research, inmate contact did not propose a significant indicator of correctional officer burnout. Even though inmate contact to include exposure to the prison subculture is a form of stress for the correctional officer, it does not necessarily lead to correctional officer burnout.

The correctional officer is not the only prison employee that is subjected to stressors and burnout effect of working in such an austere environment. Correctional workers or treatment (i.e. Counselors and case managers) staff in Garland's research was affected by many of the same stressors that correctional officers are affected by.

Garland (2004) conducted survey research on 83 correctional treatment staff in a Midwestern state with a return rate of 52%. The 41-item survey aimed to measure burnout among correctional treatment specialist. The main independent variable in Garland's survey was administrative support. Like other researcher Garland quickly established that the amount of time spent with the

inmate population did not have as big affect as most would think.

Garland's findings reported that correctional treatment staff that did not have administrative support and who feared danger from the inmate population felt far more exhausted then those who did not. According to Garland (2004) "53% of respondents reported job assignments and function" as cause for stress and burnout. This research opens the door for further investigation into how the organizational and administrative culture affects the correctional officer and worker and causes burnout.

Lindquist and Whitehead conducted research on 364 staff members from an Alabama correctional system. The respondents were surveyed using a 22-item human service survey to measure operationalized measures of job burnout. The findings of this research came as a surprise to researchers. To Lindquist and Whitehead surprise "weekly hours of inmate contact had shown almost no relationship to exhaustion or depersonalization" (1986).

Major affects from role conflict and lack of support shows an over proportionate levels of effects on correctional officer exhaustion. While greater inmate to correctional officer contact aids the officer in a greater feeling of accomplishment in their job. The evidence in this research keeps pointing to aggregate

levels of stress and burnout from administrative ambiguity and a lack of support and role conflict. Lindquist and Whitehead (1986) states in their research that:

It must be emphasized here that the role conflict being measured is the conflict of working in a setting where the line officer feels he or she must balance incompatible demands from different audiences (i.e., management and offenders), carry out tasks he or she feels should be done differently, and produce results despite lacking the resources (human and other) to carry out assignments.

Burnout is the prolonged exposure to stress and people centered or client centered occupations. When correctional officers are troubled with stress and burnout it is portrayed as an individual problem associated with a weak officer. Tracy (2003) wrote that:

Burnout and stress are often treated as problems that correctional officers can and should deal with on their own. As such, employees are usually trained to identify personal stressors and address them using tactics such as biofeedback, meditation and relaxation techniques. And when employees are considered too stress to do their work effectively; they are referred to employee assistance programs to work out their emotional difficulties behind

the scenes. In other words, programs regularly focus on stress and burnout as an individual pathology.

Correctional officers and workers are subjected to a paradoxical phenomenon in corrections called the *Double bind*. The double bind is basically the correctional officer being told to respect the inmate population while being suspicious of them (i.e. suspicious of them making weapons, selling drugs and planning escapes).

Tracy (2003) conducted research on the rigors and stressors associated with double binds in correction. Tracy (2003) outlined some of the basic double binds associated with employment in a correctional setting.

Table 1 below is an example of some of the Contrary tensions of a correctional officer:

Table 1.

Organizational Norms In Tension		Contradictory Tension
Respect inmates	Suspect inmates	Respect vs. Suspect
Nurture inmates	Be tough Maintain detachment	Nurture vs. Discipline
Follow rules and procedures	Be flexible	Consistency vs. Flexibility
Rely on others Handle problems among officers	Do not be needy Inform supervisors about fellow officers	Solidarity vs. Autonomy

Finn (2000) conducted research on Correctional officer stress that was published by the United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs and the National institute

of justice. This report addressed the problems that stress causes on safety and monetary cost on a correctional agency. This report highlights seven (7) case studies of different programs among seven agencies that deal with correctional officer stress and stress management.

The researchers of this report interviewed twenty-three (23) correctional officers, twelve (12) lieutenants and captains, and four (4) administrators to gather qualitative data on stress in a correctional environment. Organizational sources of stress in the form of rotating shifts and understaffing were dominating themes along with safety and security issues.

Work-Family conflict and Support

Delprino (2002) conducted a nation wide research on correctional officers and their families and how support services were implemented to help them deal with the occupation stress of the job. Delprino (2002) wrote that:

While stress may be an inherent part of correctional officers' occupation, it is possible that correctional organizations can offer support in the way of programs. Such programs can assist officers and their family members to minimize the potential negative impact that work related stress may have on the officers and their family members.

Dr. Delprino surveyed adult and juvenile correctional officers from seventy-six (76) correctional agencies across the country, with a response rate of 63.3%.

The questionnaire was designed to measure the amount of services provided for correctional officers and their families, obstacles to obtaining those services and how agencies continued to improve those services.

The research survey consisted of eighty-nine (89) items, and was broken down into five (5) categories. Those five (5) categories were: Types of services provide, service providers, organizational impact, agency obstacles to use of service, and agency enhancement of services. The goal of the survey was to identify how the correctional agencies supported outside programs that helped correctional officers and their families cope with stress.

The research reported that correctional officer turnover rates in the first year were around 45% in most agencies. The most common program offered for stress management was in the form of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). Services reported to be least likely offered were child support groups.

Barton et al. (2004) conducted research on correctional staff at a Midwestern high security prison. The prison had a population of approximately 1000 inmates who were serving high end prison sentences for violence. The survey was administered

to four hundred (400) correctional officers with a response rate of 68%. The demographics of the respondents were 86% white and 77% male. A total of 14 questions were asked of work-family conflict.

The results of their research were not surprising. A majority of the respondents reported not having enough time for family and social obligations. The research also found that respondents between the ages of 31-40 years of age reported more conflict with time and family obligations do to work. Barton et al (2004) wrote that "Correctional officers had higher levels of time-based conflict than correctional staff working in non-custody posts" (pg. 160).

These are import finding, considering the effects on the correctional officer because of shift lag and juggling family and social obligations against the background of shift work (i.e., weekends and holidays). Supervisors and non-custody faired well in work-family time conflict. This can be explained by understanding that most supervisors and non-custody staff do not work weekends, holidays and can take vacation and sick time since their work is not on a specific post that must be manned 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed to complete this research will be through the use of unobtrusive research. I will be using a data set made up of a stratified random sample pooled among four (4) male high security penitentiaries. This survey was conducted by a large correctional agency in the United States in the year 2005.

The 2005 Survey was administered to an anonymous, random sample of correctional staff at four (4) high security prisons throughout the agency. The survey when administered to staff is not marked nor is the respondent required to complete the survey or place any identifying marks that would identify the respondent. This data has no identifying characteristics or coded identifiers that would allow this researcher or others to identify the survey respondents, nor did this researcher have any contact with respondents, this research is strictly unobtrusive.

The Survey is not available to the public, but the results are available to agency employees on the agency's intranet website. For those conducting Scholarly research the raw data from the Survey is available by applying to the agency's research department.⁴ Most of the questions asked on the survey

⁴Due to Bureaucratic measures this researcher was unable to survey correctional staff and was required to mask all agency identifiers.

were very close to those questions that this researcher would have asked if he was administering the survey himself.

The survey will be measured by two dichotomous variables, which are gender (male and female) and job type (officer and worker) and by measuring age against those variables. Since both interact with the inmate population differently both may have different levels of stress. The independent variable being the male and female correctional officer and correctional worker will be measured against the dependent variable stress, measured using twenty three (23) questions from the agency administered survey.

Using Linear Regression analysis I will be measuring the increases and decreases in stress responses among correctional officers and correctional workers, male and female and age in the data set. I will also be measuring for statistical significance to see whether key stress indicators from the survey answers apply to the greater proportion of correctional officer or workers in a these four (4) high security prison.

The data set is made up of 81 cases ($n=81$) from four (4) high security prisons. 84% of the respondents were men and 16 % women ($SD = .36$). 32.5 % correctional officers are 67.5% are not correctional officers ($SD = .47$).The respondents mean age was 40.95 years ($SD = 6.78$). The mean years of service with the

agency was 11.94 years ($SD = 6.06$). 70.9% are not supervisors while 24.6% the respondents are ($SD = .46$).

Table 2 contains the questions used to make up the data set from the agency administered survey that this researcher will be using for this research:

Table 2.

Likert Survey

Work Environment	
Strongly Disagree	0
Disagree	1
Somewhat Disagree	2
Undecided	3
Somewhat agree	4
Agree	5
Strongly Agree	6

1. It is possible to change things in this facility.
2. I have a great deal of say over what happens at my job.
3. On my job I know exactly what my supervisor expects of me.
4. I often receive feedback from my supervisor for good performance.
5. There are job advancements in this agency for me.
6. My supervisor demonstrates sensitivity to such personal needs as shift and leave request by fairly balancing them with the needs of the facility.

Table 3 is a sample of questions from the agency conducted survey that pertains to correctional staff and officers' behavior and well-being. These are some of the most important

questions as they will point to areas of stress through how ones health has been affected and how they feel. It also asks about life changes in the form of whether the Correctional officer or worker has increased his or her use of tobacco or alcohol.

Table 3.

Likert Survey

Staff Behavior and Personal Well-being

Never	0
Very Rarely	1
Rarely	2
Now and Then	3
Often	4
Very Often	5
All the time	6

During the past 6 months how often have you had:

1. A poor appetite?
2. A stomach problem related to digestion?
3. Personal worries that bother you.
4. A feeling of being very angry?
5. A feeling of tenseness and anxiety?
6. A disturbed or restless sleep
7. A feeling of hopelessness?
8. A feeling of worthlessness?
9. A feeling of depression?
10. A feeling that you are worrying to much?
11. A feeling that nothing turns out right for you?
12. Personal worries that bothered you?
13. A wondering if anything is worthwhile?
14. A feeling of frustration by your job?
15. A feeling that everything is going wrong?

Not applicable	0
Decreased a great deal	1
Decreased Slightly	2
Stayed the Same	3
Increased slightly	4
Increased a great deal	5

16. Has your consumption of tobacco increase?
17. Has your Consumption of alcohol increased?

Using SPSS software I hope to draw correlations between what are the root causes of stress while working in these four (4) high security prisons. It is my measurable expectation to show that stress is not an autonomous phenomenon and that the structure and ethos of the agency are factors in many staff experiencing stress and only reporting it on a small scale.

DATA ANALYSIS

Stress is a phenomenon among correctional officers and workers and among both male and female in a correctional environment. But the level of stress varies. Among the 81 respondents in this study 32.1 % reported stress at a higher level, whereas 16 % reported stress in the lower levels of the survey. Table 4 measures the frequency of low, Medium, and high levels of stress reported in the survey among the respondents. But when using linear regression analysis the data set paints a much different picture.

Frequency Table 4.

Scores of Stress					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	13	16.0	16.0	16.0
	2	42	51.9	51.9	67.9
	3	26	32.1	32.1	100.0
	Total	81	100.0	100.0	

When stress as a dependant variable was measured against job type (correctional officer or correctional worker), the data shows a slight decrease in the stress level of correctional officers compared to correctional workers. Table 5 shows that correctional officers reported less stress then those in other prison jobs like education, case management and counselors. Even though the data is not statistically significant ($p < .05$), the power of the sample is not large enough to make statistical conclusion of significance.

Table 5.

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.465	.176		19.725	.000
	Correctional officer?	-.119	.308	-.044	-.387	.700

a. Dependent Variable: Job Stress Scale (6 items; High = stressed)

When you add the gender variable you get a surprising result. Table 6 shows females in this study reported slightly higher degrees of stress (B= .201). This analysis was not statistically significant at .621 ($p < .05$). This data is representative of the four institutions measured and not that of all high security institution or all institutions in this agency. But it does say something about the female correctional officer in a male high security institution.

Table 6.

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.421	.198		17.269	.000
	Correctional officer?	-.082	.318	-.030	-.259	.797
	Female = 1	.201	.404	.058	.497	.621

a. Dependent Variable: Job Stress Scale (6 items; High = stressed)

When the age variable was factored in to the Linear Regression analysis along with job type, and gender the analysis

reported less stress as the respondent got older. Table 7 shows the calculated data coefficients. The significance level for this analysis was .099, this is even closer to our standard of $p < .05$ for statistical significance.

Table 7.

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.020	.977		5.138	.000
	Correctional officer?	-.253	.331	-.093	-.765	.447
	Female = 1	.259	.401	.075	.646	.520
	age in years	-.038	.023	-.200	-1.671	.099

a. Dependent Variable: Job Stress Scale (6 items; High = stressed)

When you think about the statistical significance of when you apply the variable age into the analysis, it is a fair predictor of how this affects stress in the large population of employees in these four (4) high security institutions. If you were to multiply our sig. .099 by 100 ($.099 \times 100 = 9.9$ or 9.9%). We can fairly say that age decreases stress in approximately 90% of the employees at these four (4) correctional institutions.

As exposure to the prison environment increased (employment longevity), surprisingly stress decreased. Table 8 shows that those with more seniority showed a marginal decrease in stress related responses on the survey. Like age, the statistical significance of this analysis is very close to our statistical

goal of being at $p < .05$. The sig. for seniority is at .070 or we can we can conclude that stress decreases with age for 93% of the employees at these four (4) high security prisons.

Table 8.

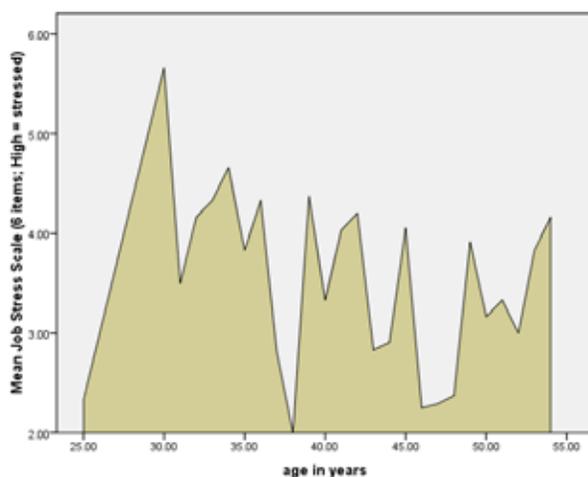
Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.958	.426		9.301	.000
	Female = 1	.234	.447	.066	.523	.603
	Correctional officer?	-.149	.380	-.051	-.391	.697
	years with BOP	-.051	.028	-.235	-1.841	.070

a. Dependent Variable: Job Stress Scale (6 items; High = stressed)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main hypothesis for this research was that once we analysis the data from four (4) high security institutions that we would see a higher aggregate level of stress for correctional officers vs. correctional workers, Male vs. female's and those older employees and those who have had long term exposure to the prison milieu. One would think that stress and burnout would show an increase with age and seniority in a correctional environment. But as we can see form table 9 that is further from the truth.

Table 9.



This research has concluded that the average male correctional officer from these four (4) high security institutions is less stressed then his correctional worker counter part and that of a female correctional officer. One could conclude that the increase in stress for the correctional

worker has more to do with the double bind of having a more rehabilitative function in the prison while trying to manage custodial obligations that come with all position in a correctional environment.

The correctional worker also works with the inmate on a different level. Many correctional workers on the other hand have report deadlines and meetings, where the correctional officer's main perfunctory duty is to police the inmate population. Confrontation for the correctional officer is relegated to a perquisite when the correctional worker views confrontation as an add stressor on top of an already demanding workload.

The female correctional officers in this study showed a marginal increase in stress. This could be because females traditionally are responsible for their employment duties as well domestic and childcare obligation. When you couple shift work and child care the female correctional officer has to battle to very important priorities. Unlike their male counterparts, female correctional officers in this study worked in male only institutions. This study did not allow for the stressors associated with cross gender supervision.

The big surprise in this study was that as the age of the correctional officer increased and as their seniority increased their stress decreased. Most would conjecture that as time in

the prison subculture increased so would stress. But maybe for most correctional officers and workers, they become complacent to their environment. Whereas the prison for most in the correctional field, just becomes another place to go to work. For the correctional employee a prison is a place where confrontation violence and stress are routine. For the correctional employee their job is no different to them than a sales person or a stock broker going to their place of employment.

Recommendations

As we have seen by this study stress is not an autonomous phenomenon. 32% of the respondents in this study showed stress levels on the higher end of the survey. Those according to this survey showing the high levels of stress are those in there late 20's and early 30's and with the least amount of seniority. Most correctional agencies have very few stress related programs or training. Most employ outside companies to provide Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). These programs allow the lone correctional employee to seek psychological services to deal with stress on and off the job.

It is the recommendation of this researcher that stress in a correctional environment needs further analysis and research conducted by correctional agencies and academia. Research into

what viable options are available for all employees and target specific groups where stress is more prevalent is needed. Stress needs to be treated as an agency and occupational hazard; and not an autonomous psychological breakdown of a weak officer.

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