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Profiling a Workplace Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Program within a Police Force

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Introduction

• Initial pilot study research with NSW Police found that injured officers treated within the workplace had notably better Physical and Mental RTW scores (FMS and SF-36) and even RTW prospects

(Orr, et al., 2013)

• NSW Police implementing RECOND program
Introduction

• Aim of research:
  – Profile police attendees of a workplace physiotherapy and reconditioning program in order to guide future treatment strategies
Participants

• Injured police officers attending workplace rehabilitation (August to December 2014)
  – Inclusion Criteria: Musculoskeletal injury
  – Exclusion Criteria: Illness or diagnosed mental health injury

• 30 Male / 12 Female NSW Police Force Officers
  – Male n=30: mean age 43.3 ± 9.56 years:
  – Female n=12, mean age 38.2 ± 6.39 years
Methods

1) Primary Interview
   – Type of injury (classified according to body region)
   – Gender, DOB, rank, work status & years of service
   – Use of load bearing vest (LBV), hip or thigh holster

2) Height & Weight
   – to calculate BMI

3) Nominal Roll & Attendance (Aug – Dec 14)
   – Number of treatment sessions booked/ attended
Results

- Number of Treatments attended = 296/340 (87%)
- Lumbar spine injury = 40.5% (n=17); 119 Rx attended
  - Mean number of Rx attended = 7.0 ± 3.71
- Lumbar spine injury occurred across all ranks & groups for years of service
  - Highest prevalence among SGTs (29% of all Lx Sp inj.)
  - More frequent in 0-10 yrs and 21-30 yrs of service
Results

- **BMI:**
  - 57.5% (n=23) → 25.0 – 29.9 (overweight)

- **Males vs. Females:**
  - ♀ > mean number of Rx attended all injuries than ♂
    - (8.25 ± 5.12 vs. 6.57 ± 4.03)
Results

• LBV:
  – 31% (n=13); No LBV: 69% (n=29)
  – Low back injury > when no LBV used vs. when LBV used (44.8% vs. 30.8%)

• Thigh Holster:
  – 35.7% (n=15); Hip Holster: 64.3% (n=27)
  – Low back injury > when hip holster used vs. when thigh holster used (44.4% vs. 33.3%)
Discussion

- **Lx Sp injury** = most commonly reported WMSD in NSW Police officers attending a workplace-led physiotherapy & rehabilitation program
  - Anderson et al. (2011) - high incidence of lower back pain associated with many occupational stressors or lifestyle related issues
  - Burton et al. (1998) - chronic low back pain (CLBP) was associated with length of service (due to reoccurrence of previous injury)
Discussion

• Female officers showed higher average for number of Rx attended
  – Feuerstein, et al. (1997) - higher overall and musculoskeletal-related disability risk in women US Army Personnel
Discussion

- Research on military populations indicates that WMSD represent a prevalent source of outpatient visits, **lost work time**, hospitalisation & disability (Feuerstein et al., 1997)
  - The findings of this study support the use of an in-house physiotherapy & rehabilitation program – eliminates cost of travel to external physio services
  - Mean cost per person = $711.81, Revised mean cost per person = $394.67; Savings =$317.14 per person
Conclusions and Practical Applications

• Injuries to the lumbar spine were the most common presentation in a police workplace rehabilitation service – more often associated with wearing a hip holster than wearing a thigh holster

• Workplace rehabilitation services for injured police officers can limit lost productivity and travel costs associated with travel to external services during work time
References


