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RESILIENCE IN POLICE

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Background: The study examined the feasibility of implementing an innovative stress-resilience intervention using self-regulation, to modify psychological stress, autonomic response to stress and cardiovascular disease risk factors in police officers.

Methods: Subjects included police officers age 21 to 65 years (n=40). To self-regulate responses to stress, officers were educated on techniques to manage emotional and physical responses to stress, 2) practiced self-regulation and 3) used iPad to practice techniques to build coherence associated with heart rate variability. Pre to post-difference in coherence was tested using a one-sample two-sided t-test. To evaluate relationships between differences in coherence and differences in outcomes, Pearson correlation coefficients (r) were calculated. Correlations among variables were examined.

Results: Post intervention officers showed reduction in diastolic blood pressure (M = -6.8, SD= 9.3, p = .02, d = 0.73), correlation coefficient values for the relationship between differences in coherence and differences in outcomes were large for Impact of Event Scale Avoidance subscale (r = -.58, p = .10), Impact of Event Scale total score (r = -.55, p = .13), and clinically significant changes were found for both the sympathetic and parasympathetic contributors of heart rate variability.

Conclusion: Results support post intervention change and these methods may well be applicable to other high stress occupations including nursing. This data is also necessary to support policy change

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