Interventions for the prevention and management of occupational stress injury in first responders: an overview of reviews

Rationale

Occupational stress injury (OSI) describes a broad range of psychological conditions resulting from duties performed on the job that interfere with a person's life, including anxiety disorders, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). First responders are a particularly susceptible population, as they often encounter high-risk, stressful situations within their line of work[1, 2]. This review aims to summarize the existing evidence on interventions for the prevention and management of occupational stress illness or injury in first responders.

Implications

The results of this study will be shared with the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS) to aid in the development of an evidence-based strategy to prevent and manage first responder occupational stress injury.

PROSPERO registration:
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References

1. Senate Canada. Interim Report on the Occupational Stress Injuries of Canada's Veterans. Available from: https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/Committee/412/secd/rep/rep17jun15-e.pdf. 2015.
2. Government of Canada, Veterans Affairs Canada. Mental Health: Research and information. 2018 [Available from: https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/services/health/mental-health/understanding-mental-health].

Background

- First responders are at high-risk of experiencing OSI. This review includes systematic reviews targeting first responders or frontline community safety personnel, with a focus on preventing and managing OSI, as well as strategies to build organizational resilience and promote rehabilitation.

Objective

- To conduct an overview of reviews addressing the evidence needs of the MCSCS in developing an evidence-based strategy to implement interventions and programs for OSI in first responders.

Methodology

- *Our eligibility criteria are outlined below using the PICOS framework*:
    - *Population*: police, coroners, forensic pathologists, fire fighters, and correctional employees
    - *Intervention*: prevention strategies (e.g. training and learning approaches), rehabilitation strategies (e.g. therapeutic interventions) and resilience building strategies (e.g. shifting organizational culture) targeting OSI
    - *Comparator*: any comparisons
    - *Outcomes*: measuring mental health status, including but not limited to stress, anxiety, depression, addiction, PTSD, stigma, suicidal ideation/behavior, physiological responses to trauma, time lost from work
    - *Study design*: systematic reviews of interventions
    - *Other*: limited to articles published in English in the last 10 years

- The literature search strategy will be developed by a library scientist and peer-reviewed using the PRESS checklist. The MEDLINE, EMBASE, PsycINFO, CINAHL, Web of Science, and Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL) databases will be searched for relevant reviews.

- Citations and full-text articles will be screened for relevance by pairs of reviewers independently using synthesi.SR, an online screening tool developed by the Knowledge Translation Program at St. Michael's Hospital. Data abstraction and quality appraisal will be completed by one reviewer and verified by a second reviewer. Any discrepancies that arise will be resolved by discussion or by a third reviewer.

Knowledge Translation Strategy

- The summary of results from the overview of reviews report will be shared with the MCSCS and will be disseminated through publication in an open-access, peer-reviewed journal. Additionally, the findings from our review will be presented to relevant stakeholders and knowledge users at a forum to be held in Toronto.