

The importance of prevention for maintaining the mental health of military police officers

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Renata Trindade Rossi – UNIFIL

SUMMARY

Security professionals in military corporations are subject to stress on a daily basis, whether due to the pressure of performing their duties or the situations they face on a daily basis. The constant risk of death, the fear felt by their families, the lack of recognition by the population, the demands, the military hierarchy, among other factors, are responsible for causing significant problems in the mental health of police officers, such as: depression, anxiety, fatigue, irritability, episodes of aggression, development of addictions to alcohol and other drugs, in addition to problems in physical health and social/family life. Thus, it is understood that it is urgent to implement public policies that provide continuous psychological and psychiatric care to professionals in the corporation, in order to mitigate damage to mental health. Through a review of specialized literature, we sought to highlight the need for actions to prevent and maintain the mental health of military police officers. To this end, the general objective was to confirm the importance of policies focused on mental health within the military corporation. The specific objectives are two: a) to discuss the routine of professionals in the corporation and the impacts on mental health; c) highlight the need for routine programs focused on mental health, with constant psychological support and not just in specific situations. During the development of the review, it was possible to observe that there are few programs of continuous attention to the mental health of military police officers and to confirm the need to implement such actions at a national level.

Keywords: Mental Health. Military Corps. Psychology. Psychiatry.

ABSTRACT

Security professionals in the military are subject to stress on a daily basis, either because of the pressure they are under in their job or because of the situations they deal with on a daily basis. The constant risk of death, the fear felt by the family, the lack of recognition from the population, the demands, the military hierarchy, among other factors, are responsible for causing significant problems in the mental health of police officers, such as: depression, anxiety, fatigue, irritability, episodes of aggression, the development of addictions to alcohol and other drugs, as well as problems with physical health and social/family life. Thus, there is an urgent need to implement public policies that provide ongoing psychological and psychiatric care to professionals in the corps, in order to mitigate the damage to their mental health. A review of the specialized literature sought to highlight the need for actions to prevent and maintain the mental health of military police officers. To this end, the general objective was to verify the importance of policies focused on mental health within the military corps. The specific objectives are twofold: a) to discuss the routine of professionals in the corps and the impacts on mental health; c) to highlight the need for routine programs focused on mental health, with constant psychological support and not just in specific situations. During the course of the review, it was possible to observe that there are few ongoing mental health care programs for military police officers and to see the need to implement such actions nationwide.

Keywords: Mental health. Military Corporation. Psychology. Psychiatry.

1. INTRODUCTION

The military police corporation has two basic pillars for its support – discipline and hierarchy, which results in a complex environment that directly reflects on professional and consequently, in the exercise of the profession. Other points can be pointed out that affect the mental health of these professionals, such as: low pay, precarious conditions work, negative representation before society, constant stress and feeling of insecurity about the future (Neto, 2018; Brandão, 2019).

According to Miranda and Guimarães (2016), the police officer's work environment military is marked by high levels of stress resulting from constant risk situations and many times, traumatic; generating significant emotional and mental exhaustion. Faced with these problems, Casagrande (2022) highlights that the situation is aggravated by the lack of programs mental health in the corporation, which provide adequate psychological support and attention constant in preserving the health of professionals.

According to Casagrande (2022), by creating a culture of emotional support within the corporation, police officers feel welcomed and emotionally supported in any situation situation, not having to face their problems, doubts and traumas in isolation. The reflection of the lack of actions that act in the prevention and maintenance of the mental health of these professionals can be observed in the high rates of depression, chemical dependency, violence internal and even suicide (Neto, 2018; Brandão, 2019).

In the same perspective, Del Fiol (2023) points to the urgent need for implementation of structured mental health policies incorporated into the routine of professionals of the military corporation that provide, in addition to emergency care, constant actions prevention and maintenance of the psychological well-being of military police officers.

To guide the production of the article, the following guiding question was determined: what is the importance and effectiveness of implementing mental health policies that meet the needs of professionals of the military corporation on an ongoing basis, inserted daily into their routine?

In view of the facts presented and the issue raised, the following objective was established: general: to verify, through bibliographic review, the importance of policies focused on health mental within the military corporation. The specific objectives are two: a) to discuss the routine of the professionals of the corporation and the impacts on mental health; c) highlight the need to

routine programs focusing on mental health, with constant psychological support and not only in specific situations.

For the development of the article, the chosen methodology was that of bibliographic review of specialized literature. The articles that supported the review are included among the period from 2016 to 2025. The results will be presented in the next chapters.

2 DEVELOPMENT

2.1 2 POLICE ROUTINE AND ITS IMPACTS ON MENTAL HEALTH

According to Minayo (2014), military police officers are subject to trauma on a daily basis resulting from situations that occurred in the exercise of the function, inadequacies in the conditions of work, imminent confrontations, etc. In the same vein of thought, studies carried out in recent years point to a direct and significant relationship between mental illness resulting from the routine associated with the working conditions of military police officers. The professionals of public safety are exposed daily to situations of stress, pressure and demand for results, distrust of part of the population and they live powerless in relation to their own security (Franco, 2018; Del Fiol, 2023; Dias; Siqueira; Ferreira, 2023).

According to Franco (2018), the stigmatization surrounding health problems mental health, especially within the military, increase the vulnerability of these professionals. Minayo (2014) reports that the military police corporation has always been vulnerable, being able to be a victim of physical and/or psychological aggression and running a constant risk of injuries or death by firearm, bladed weapon or in pursuit.

Since there has been a police force in the world, it has been the target of victimization that materializes in traumas, injuries or deaths due to firearm, bladed weapon, physical aggression, psychological aggression and attempted murder. It is also known that some situations make these professionals more vulnerable: training for confrontation, inadequate working conditions, such as precarious vehicles, weapons and action strategies [...] (Minayo, 2014, p. 522).

A study by Oliveira and Santos (2010) draws attention to the fact that death is an element present in the police routine due to the risks inherent to the function performed and this is an aspect which reverberates in family life and increases the psychological suffering of the professional. According to Costa and Freitas (2025, p. 6) point out, “police routine is marked by constant risks, tension emotional and a burden of responsibility that transcends the boundaries of the work environment work, directly influencing family dynamics”. As Alves (2020) explains,

The psychosocial damage caused to military police officers reflects negatively on their quality of life, which evidences psychological suffering and emotional disorders implying adverse conditions for performance professional in family relationships and in the institution itself where he works, above all, for the citizen to whom he is intended their actions (Alves, 2020, p. 2).

For Anerti et al. (2024), there is great unpredictability in relation to the everyday situations that permeate the profession, generating an environment of insecurity that negatively affects the professional's emotional health. Alves (2020) points out other consequences resulting from the situations of risk and violence to which these professionals are exposed exposed, such as: long working hours that interfere with interaction with the family; episodes of insomnia, fatigue and irritability; mood instability; family conflicts and difficulty in social relationships.

This brief analysis on the mental health of military police officers and the relationship with routine of the profession reveals the urgent need for policies that act in prevention and maintaining the mental health of all full-time members of the corporation, not only in emergency situations.

3 MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS: PREVENTION AND MAINTENANCE

Several studies point to the need for approaches that enable ongoing psychological support, mental well-being programs to prevent harm and that aim to maintain mental health (Silva; Bueno, 2017; Franco, 2018). According to Cavagnolli and Machado (2024, p. 7) highlight, “(...) the implementation of health policies mental, stress management training and the development of strategies for

early identification of psychological problems are effective measures (...)" Silva and Bueno (2017) draw attention to the need for accessible psychological assistance in order to "create a culture of care and prevention within the police forces" (Cavagnolli; Machado, 2024, p. 7).

According to Garcia (2024, p. 7), military police officers generally "seek assistance doctor and does not receive mental/psychological support that can alleviate all chronic symptoms" caused by the reality of the work of the military corporation professional. The author cites, in addition of the chronic symptoms already described – depression, anxiety, irritability, etc., "the increase in tobacco and alcohol consumption to reduce vulnerability in the police environment and the development of obesity, metabolic problems, heart problems and diabetes" (Garcia, 2024, p. 7).

According to studies by Santos and Saturnino (2023), it is essential to offer specialized psychological and psychiatric care on an ongoing basis, so that the police can seek this support at any time, not just when something happens extreme situation. The authors point out the importance of individualized monitoring and support groups that can help prevent and maintain the mental health of these people professionals.

Preventing mental illness is a task that must be done daily, not only when the police officer goes through a specific situation that could trigger changes on the emotional well-being of these professionals (Silveira, 2020). For Rogero (2024), the lack of adequate and continuous psychological support, as well as stigmatization in relation to the search for treatment make the situation even more problematic. Gual (2024) states that within the military corporation there is a culture of discouragement regarding mental health and its problems, representing obstacles to treatment, thus increasing the vulnerability of class.

As observed in studies by Gual (2024) and Morelli (2025), when not there are adequate interventions, all mental health related problems run the risk of being ignored and, consequently, not treated, at least not effectively. According to Morelli (2025, p. 5), in addition to the problems already presented, "the lack of support constant psychological stress can impair the ability to make quick and correct choices, which are vital to police action, resulting in inappropriate attitudes that impact effectiveness and security".

In order to resolve these issues, several legislative proposals have emerged aiming to ensure psychological and psychiatric assistance when specific situations occur that can generate trauma and stress, but also with availability to receive and welcome this professional at any time; considering that various everyday situations, when accumulated, can result in psychological suffering (Brazil, 2022).

As Bertassoni, Miranda and Furtado (2023) explain, health promotion mental health of military police officers must be a joint action between the State, civil society and the military institutions as a whole. To this end, the authors reinforce the importance of implementation of policies and programs provided for by law and which focus on mental health the military police.

Law No. 13,675 of 2018 provides in art. 42 the National Quality of Life Program for Health Professionals. Public Security (Pro-Life), which aims to: "elaborate, implement, support, monitor and evaluate, among others, projects for psychosocial and occupational health care programs for safety professionals public and social defense" (Brazil, 2018). In conjunction with Ordinance No. 483, of November 9, 2021, of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, reinforces the incentive for projects and programs focused on valuing public safety professionals, where fundable actions are planned regarding the enhancement of quality of life of professionals, including: biopsychosocial care and monitoring, attention to stressful situations and risk, victimization and suicide (Bertassoni; Miranda; Furtado, 2023, p. 341).

In addition to Pró-Vida, other programs are of great importance, with emphasis on for Bill No. 2,573 of 2023 approved in December 2024, which establishes the mandatory psychiatric and psychological assistance services for professionals in public safety. The actions of this project, although independent, occur within the Pró-Vida and have a total focus on mental care and the quality of mental health (Gual, 2024; Morelli, 2025).

Another important initiative is the Prumos Psychosocial Care Program made possible by the Paraná State Secretariat for Public Security (SESP-PR), which seeks develop actions to prevent and maintain mental well-being with military police officers, firefighters, criminal experts, prison officers, also extending the service to their families (Gual, 2024; Morelli, 2025).

Gual (2024) also mentions the inclusion of psychologists in Rio's Tactical Units de Janeiro, as in the Special Operations Battalion (BOPE), providing daily support to agents and acting in crisis management, mitigating possible tragic and other consequences issues arising from lack of mental health care.

However, as highlighted by Rogero (2024) and Garcia (2024), such initiatives, although very important, they are still restricted to specific cities, states or units, not covering all professionals in the corporation. Thus, the importance of expanding these programs so that all professionals in the corporation throughout the country have support focused on emotional management and developing skills to deal with everyday situations that can generate stress and trigger anxiety, depression and others mental and physical illnesses.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

During the bibliographic review it was possible to observe that there are many situations that affect directly the quality of mental health of public security professionals, with the aim of focus of the study, military police officers. The situations that permeate the daily lives of these professionals can generate consequences that affect, in addition to the police officer, his family and circle social. These situations significantly impact coexistence in the workplace, and negatively impact your personal life; it is possible to understand that stress and emotional fatigue can generate social isolation, reveal aggressive attitudes, increased irritation, intolerance, expansion of social conflicts and other consequences.

In addition to the lack of these actions focusing on mental health in most corporations in the country, there are other reasons that compel the professional not to seek help professional mental, such as the stigma of this type of problem, corporate resistance in understand the relevance of these initiatives, the changes in organizational culture and hierarchical structure of security forces, and others.

These situations generate emotional and social impacts, but they can also lead to physical illnesses and risky behavior, such as the consumption of alcoholic beverages and other drugs, increasing the psychological suffering of these professionals. Several studies highlight the harmful effects of many everyday situations on people's mental health

military police, and emphasize that in most cases, the professional has to deal with it alone with the consequences of these situations. Thus, considering that everyday pressure affects the professional in the work environment and professional performance, in mental and physical well-being, in family and social coexistence; the importance of the presence of a professional is evident trained continuously and not just in specific situations.

In short, in this way, the urgency in formulating and implementing programs and public policies that can ensure the mental well-being of professionals military; with actions aimed at the prevention, maintenance and stabilization of mental health in military corporation, also covering the family and other links that may be affected as a consequence of the police officer's psychological suffering.

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