

# Work-related stress and mental well-being among police personnel at Mangalore jurisdiction

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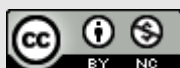
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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Stress is the physiological response to anything that requires focus or movement. Police officers are responsible for enforcing laws in their jurisdiction, as there is a rise in the personal risk of verbal and physical assaults, as well as ongoing involvement in a range of unpleasant situations, the duties of law enforcement officers tend to become fundamentally stressful. This research aims to assess the work related stress and mental wellbeing among police personnel at Mangalore jurisdiction.

**Methods:** Descriptive study was conducted with 220 police personnel from Mangalore Jurisdiction from 3rd March 2023 to 31st March 2023. Operational Police Stress Questionnaire and Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales were used to gather data from participants selected through a disproportionate stratified random sampling technique. To determine the relationship between police officers' mental wellness and their level of work-related stress, Karl Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was calculated.

**Results:** Most 87.3% of the police personnel had high stress followed by 10.5% of police personnel had medium stress and 2.2% of police personnel had low stress. Majority 59.6% of police personnel had medium mental wellbeing, 35.9% had high mental wellbeing and 4.5% had low mental wellbeing. The results also showed that there was no significant correlation ( $r=0.034$ ) between work related stress and mental wellbeing among police personnel.

**Conclusion:** This study concluded that there is high work-related stress among police personnel at Mangalore jurisdiction which is directly or indirectly affecting their mental wellbeing.

**Keywords:** Mangalore jurisdiction, mental wellbeing, police personnel, work related stress

## Introduction

Stress is the physiological response to anything that requires focus or movement.<sup>1</sup> Both positive and negative circumstances can cause stress, and it manifests itself when the body reacts to any form of excessive demand.<sup>2</sup> Stress increases the risk of physical and mental illness as well as impacting intellectual and physical fitness, decreasing quality of life.<sup>3</sup> Workplace stress can occur in a

wide range of contexts.<sup>4</sup>

Police officers are responsible for enforcing laws in their jurisdiction.<sup>5</sup> Due to the personal risk of verbal and physical assault and exposure to unpleasant situations, their duties tend to become fundamentally stressful.<sup>6</sup> Stress can cause poor judgment, increased mood swings, and an increased risk of mental illnesses like anxiety or

depression. The memory, attentiveness, and emotional management of a police officer can be significantly impacted by long-term or chronic stress.<sup>7</sup>

Mental health is a state of well-being in which a person is aware of their own potential, capable of coping with life's regular stresses, able to work creatively and productively, and able to contribute to their community.<sup>8</sup> Police officers' mental health statistics suggest that, on average, 15% of American cops suffer from Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms.<sup>9</sup> Maintaining mental well-being is essential for sustaining good mental health, just as physical fitness is vital for maintaining physical strength.<sup>10</sup> Workplace stress may contribute to the emergence of mental health issues among police personnel.<sup>11</sup>

There is evidence to support the idea that police forces experience mental health difficulties differently from other professional groups. A variety of disorders, including stress, depressive disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, burnout and familial issues have been documented in studies on the mental health challenges faced by police officers. If police officers lack support systems (friends, family, classmates, and the confidence of co-workers and superiors), or if they lack characteristics that make them manageable, they can be particularly vulnerable to poor mental health<sup>12</sup>. So this study aimed at assessing the relationship between work-related stress and mental well-being among police personnel.

## Methods

A descriptive research design was used to conduct a study among police personnel in selected police stations in the northern and southern regions of the Mangalore Jurisdiction. Data collection was scheduled from March 3, 2023, to March 31, 2023. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Ethical Committees. Permission was secured from the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mangalore, and various police stations in the Mangalore jurisdiction. Twenty-one police stations cover both regions under the Mangalore

jurisdiction. The northern region of Mangalore jurisdiction comprises 11 police stations, from which the investigator randomly selected 5, while the southern region has 10 police stations, from which 5 were also randomly selected for the study. Each police stations was considered as a stratum.

With 95% confidence interval and 80% power, the sample size calculated to be 212, but the researcher chose to include 220 participants in the present study<sup>21</sup>. The sample consisted of police personnel, including Constables, Head Constables, Assistant Sub Inspectors, Sub Inspectors and Inspectors at the selected police stations within Mangalore jurisdiction.

The method of sampling that was used was a disproportionate stratified random sampling technique in which the different stations of the north and south regions of Mangalore Jurisdiction were considered as 10 strata and a disproportional distribution was used to determine the individuals selected from every stratum. At the level of stratum, a list of police personnel was collected from each police station, and a lottery method of simple random sampling was used to select the 22 participants from each police station.

A pre-tested, 14-item demographic proforma was developed and used to acquire the background information of police personnel. Operational Police Stress Questionnaire (OPSQ), a 7-point standardized scale with 20 items, was used to assess the work-related stress, and Warwick Edinburgh mental well-being scale (WEMWBS), a 5-point standardized tool with 14 items, was used to assess the mental well-being among police personnel. A reliability test (Cronbach's alpha) was done to check the reliability of the tools. The reliability quotient obtained for the Kannada version of the questionnaire for work-related stress was 0.84, and for mental well-being, it was 0.74.

All police personnel were cooperative during the data collection process. The gathered data were compiled in preparation for data analysis. Descriptive analysis was conducted using Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard

deviation. Karl Pearson's Correlation Coefficient were computed to determine the relationship between work-related stress and mental wellbeing among police personnel. Chi-square tests were

used to find the association between work related stress and mental wellbeing among police personnel with selected demographic variables.

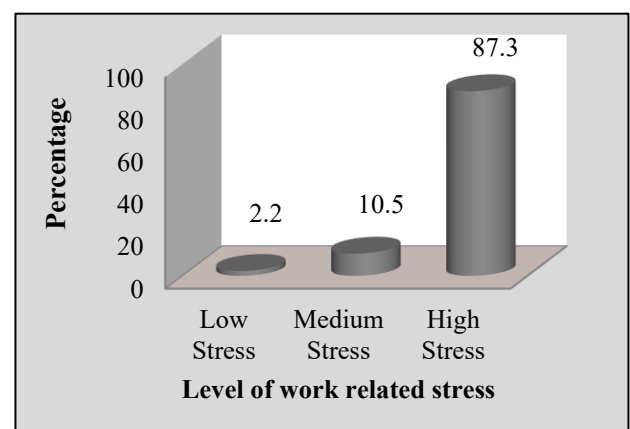
## Results

**Table1: Distribution of samples according to the demographic variables.**

S. No.	Demographical variables	Frequency &Percentage
1.	Age (in years) a) 20-30 b) 31-40 c) 41-50 d) 51-60	90 (40.9%) 57 (25.9%) 47 (21.4%) 26 (11.8%)
2.	Gender a) Male b) Female	173 (78.6%) 47 (21.4%)
3.	Educational status a) SSLC b) PUC c) Diploma d) Graduate e) Postgraduate	16 (7.3%) 60 (27.3%) 8 (3.6%) 120 (54.5%) 16 (7.3%)
4.	Marital status a) Married b) Unmarried	153 (69.5%) 67 (30.5%)
5.	Type of the family a) Nuclear family b) Joint family c) Extended family	60 (27.3%) 157 (71.4%) 3 (1.3%)
6.	Duration of work experience as police (in years) a) 0 to 10 b) 11 to 20 c) 21 to 30 d) 31 to 40	119 (54.1%) 45 (20.5%) 49 (22.3%) 7 (3.1%)

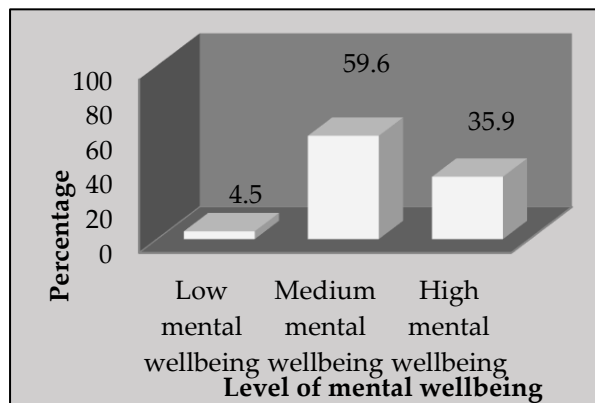
The level of work-related stress among police personnel was assessed using the Operational Police Stress Questionnaire and graded as follows: < 2.0 = low stress; 2.1-3.4 = medium stress; > 3.5 = high stress.

The grading of the stress level is determined by taking the average of total stress score divided by the total number of items in the Operational Police Stress Questionnaire.



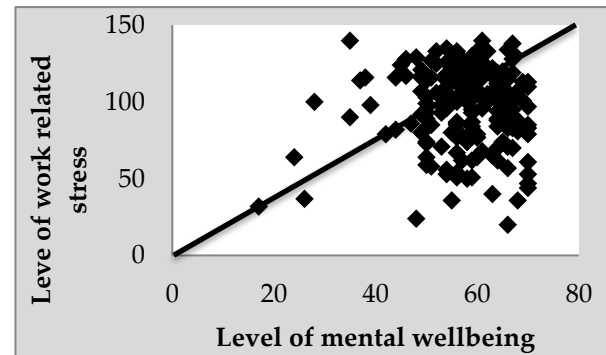
**Figure 1: Distribution of police personnel according to the work related stress.**

The level of mental wellbeing among police personnel was assessed using Warwick Edinburg Mental Wellbeing Questionnaire and graded as follows: 14–42 = low mental wellbeing, 43–60 = medium mental wellbeing and 61–70 = high mental wellbeing and depicted in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Distribution of police personnel according to the mental wellbeing**

The obtained 'r' value (0.034) is less than the table value (0.138) at the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis  $H_{01}$  was accepted and it was concluded that there is no significant relationship between work-related stress and mental wellbeing scores among police personnel as shown in the scattered diagram.



**Figure 3: The correlation between work-related stress and mental wellbeing among police personnel.**

**Table 2: Association of work-related stress and mental wellbeing among police personnel with selected demographical variables.** n=220

SL NO	Demographical variables	Work related stress		Mental wellbeing	
		$\chi^2$ value	p value	$\chi^2$ value	p value
1	Age	7.717	0.052	3.543	0.315
2	Gender	3.718	0.054	3.302	0.069
3	Educational status	23.087	0	2.047	0.727
4	Marital status	1.807	0.179	1.22	0.269
5	Type of family	1.244	0.537	4.322	0.115
6	Duration of work experience as police	4.576	0.206	5.783	0.123
7	Rank of job at present	6.885	0.142	8.729	0.068
8	Type of work demand	6.842	0.033	1.361	0.506
9	Duration of work per day	0.578	0.447	0.164	0.686
10	Nature of work	12.375	0.054	5.171	0.522
11	Any illness	2.086	0.149	0.012	0.911
12	Routine medical check-up	12.817	0	4.717	0.03
13	Attending any mental wellness programme from organization	5.198	0.023	3.237	0.072
14	Practice any stress reduction techniques	1.092	0.296	9.353	0.002

\*Significant at  $\leq 0.05$  level of significance

S- Significant, NS- Not Significant

The data presented in Table 2 indicates that there is a significant association between the level of work-related stress among police personnel of Mangalore jurisdiction and selected demographic variables such as educational status ( $p < 0.00$ ), routine medical check-up ( $p < 0.00$ ) and attending

any mental wellness programme from organization ( $p < 0.023$ ). Since the calculated chi-square value is greater than the table value at the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) was rejected, and the research hypothesis was accepted.

The data presented in Table 2 indicates that there is a significant association between the level of mental wellbeing among police personnel of Mangalore jurisdiction and selected demographic variables such as routine medical check-up ( $p < 0.03$ ) and attending any mental wellness programme from organization ( $p < 0.002$ ). Since the calculated chi-square value is greater than the table value at the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted.

## Discussion

This study assessed work related stress and mental wellbeing among police personnel, so that preventive interventions may be recommended.

The findings related to demographic variables of the present study were supported by research conducted by John-Akinola YO, et al., which indicated that the age of the respondents ranged from 22 to 59 years with a mean age of  $42.1 \pm 14.4$ . More than two fifths 138 (40.6%) of the respondents were within the age range of 22 to 32 years, and a smaller number 78 (22.9%) were in the 33 to 43 years age group. Thirty-four (10.0%) were within the age range of 44 to 54 years, while 90 (26.5%) were aged over 55 years. There were more males 187 (58.1%) than females 135 (41.9%); more than a third 108 (33.5%) of the respondents held a National Diploma qualification, 96 (28.9%) secondary education, while few 58 (18.0%) of the respondents were degree holders. More than two fifths 141 (41.5%) of the respondents had been in the police force for 11 to 20 years, while only 27 (7.9%) had practiced for over 30 years<sup>13</sup>.

This study revealed that 87.3% of police personnel were experiencing high work-related stress, 10.5% had medium stress and 2.2% police personnel had low stress. This result is marginally more than that found in another study by Queirós C, et al., in Portugal, which revealed that 88.4% of police personnel had high stress, 9% of subjects had moderate stress and only 2.6% suffered from low level of stress.<sup>14</sup> However, a study by Saya G K, et al., in Puducherry showed that 32.8% of police personnel had high stress, 51% were suffering

from very high stress, 11.5% had average stress and 4.7% had low stress.<sup>15</sup>

This study revealed that 59.6% of police personnel had medium mental wellbeing, 35.9% had high mental wellbeing and 4.5% had low mental wellbeing. This finding was marginally higher than that of a study by Marshall R E, et al., in Sydney, which revealed 84.1% had low levels of mental health symptoms, 73.8% had moderate levels, and 70.3% had low levels of mental health symptoms.<sup>16</sup> The results of this investigation were corroborated by a cross-sectional study by Weiner C in Wisconsin, which showed the symptoms of anxiety among police personnel were 73.75%, depression 83.44% and behavioral control 90.31%.<sup>17</sup>

With regard to the relationship between work-related stress and mental wellbeing among police personnel, the calculated coefficient of correlation 'r' value was found to be 0.034 with 218 degrees of freedom. The correlation of the present study is supported by a study conducted by Demou E, et al., Makurdi. The study results show that there was a significant negative influence of work stress on dimensions of psychological wellbeing, with a calculated 'r' value was 0.223.<sup>18</sup>

The association of work-related stress among police personnel in this study is supported by a study performed by Umbaru A in Nigeria. The results showed that occupational stress had a significant association with Age ( $p < 2.310$ ), Gender ( $p < 51.55$ ), Marital status ( $p < 9.80$ ), Educational qualification ( $p < 20.687$ ), Rank ( $p < 255.102$ ), Working experience ( $p < 17.223$ ), and Income ( $p < 56.822$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis accepted.<sup>19</sup>

The association of mental wellbeing among police personnel in this study is supported by a research conducted to examine the association of work-related stress with mental health problems in a special police force unit in Italy. Results showed that the Depression Inventory scores had a significant association with length of employment ( $p < 0.12$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.<sup>11</sup>



## Limitations

The study included only the police personnel of law and order department. The study was limited to a survey of work-related stress and mental wellbeing and no interventions were provided to the police personnel. No follow-up was conducted after assessing their work-related stress and mental wellbeing.

## Conclusion

Police personnel are the executive civil force, responsible for upholding laws for prevention and detection of crime and maintaining public order. They carry significant responsibilities due to ongoing development, democracy, and public

welfare, as well as the complexities of life and social relationships. The importance of policing has grown, especially in light of advancement in technology, which have both beneficial and harmful effects on society.<sup>20</sup> Policing is one of the most mentally taxing jobs, contending with long and often rotating shifts, threats of violence, increased need for hyper-vigilance, and a lack of public support, all of which create chronic stress.<sup>1</sup> There is a need to manage work related stress to maintain the mental health<sup>22</sup>. Hence, this study aimed to assess work related stress and mental wellbeing among police personnel at Mangalore jurisdiction.

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