

## Exploring the impact of trauma on the physical health of police officers: A survey on European police trainers

**Konstantinos Papazoglou**  
Hellenic Police Academy, Canada

Much has been written in the scientific literature about the impact of trauma on the physical health of war veterans (e.g., Andersen et al., 2010; Pizarro, Silver, & Prause, 2006). Moreover, Violanti et al. (2007) found that traumatized police officers present higher levels of cortisol secretion. Chronic secretion of cortisol may lead to physical health difficulties such as misuse of alcohol and drugs, anxiety sensitivity, depression, memory, and threat-related decision making among active-duty police officers (Asmundson & Stapleton, 2008; Austin-Ketch et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2010). Moreover, traumatized police officers experience sleep disturbances, nightmares, fatigue, headaches, changes in appetite, and exaggerated startle response (Cross & Ashley, 2004; Mohr et al., 2003; Rajaratnam et al., 2011). Authors of this study conducted a survey on European police trainers in order to explore to what extent European police trainers are cognizant of the extant scientific literature that describes the impact of trauma on police officers' physical health. Authors aim to identify possible ways, if any, that European police trainers have incorporated or are willing to incorporate findings about health in their work with police trainees/cadets during the training process. Findings of this survey will enable us to examine if it is possible to use police training as a "vehicle" for the education of police officers about the connection between trauma and physical health. Based on the research findings, we will make recommendations to police trainers, encouraging them to include such issues in their training curricula benefiting their trainees and helping them become aware of the connection between mental and physical health. We aim to develop guidelines for preventive policy programs that support officer's in processing and healing from trauma exposure and provide the pathways by which officers would be able to seek medical and psychological help whenever they need it.

### Biography

Konstantinos Papazoglou is a police captain at the Hellenic police academy and he completed his Master's degree at New York University. As a clinician, he has worked in criminal justice settings. He has presented his work in community-based trauma prevention and culturally relevant interventions for first responders throughout North America and Europe. He has published in peer-reviewed journals and earned research grants and awards. He is a student member of the International Relations Committee of the APA (Div.56) and a co-moderator of the European Police Psychologists Network (EMPEN). He is currently doing his Ph.D. in Psychology (applied clinical research) with fellowship at the University of Toronto.

kp765@nyu.edu