

Work Situations and Posttraumatic Symptomatology among Crime Scene Investigators

Tinkara Pavšič Mrevlje, Lecturer of psychology at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, e-mail: tinkara.pavsicmrevlje@fvv.uni-mb.si

Crime scene investigators (CSIs) are often exposed to traumatic events and their aftermaths as a part of their work. Consequently, more common presence of the prominent posttraumatic symptoms (for example flashbacks and avoidance of places and things that could resemble the trauma for instance) among CSIs, as compared to the population in general, is not surprising. This article presents part of a larger study about trauma among CSIs, in which 85% of Slovene investigators working in the field were involved. Results confirm that the prevalence of posttraumatic stress disorder among crime scene investigators is more frequent than in the general population. Exploratory factor analysis showed five stressful work factors: working hours, work content, recognition of CSI's work value, working circumstances and working for the police. The correlation of factors with individual posttraumatic symptoms (especially hyper-vigilance, avoidance, reexperiencing and posttraumatic impairment) reveals that the stress of work lies not only in organizational factors like shift work and night shifts, but in operational factors as well (for example crime scene investigation of murder and suicide cases).

Keywords: crime scene investigators, trauma, work stressors, organizational stress, operational stress

UDC: 159.944.4

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Ključne besede:
Komentarji:
Datum izdelave: 23.9.2014 15:42:00
Številka spremembe: 3
Zadnjič shranjeno: 23.9.2014 15:56:00
Zadnji shranil: jesmrekar
Celotni čas urejanja: 41 minut
Nazadnje natisnjen na: 10.4.2015 14:15:00
Kot pri zadnjem popolnem tiskanju
Število strani: 1
Število besed: 243 (približno)
Število znakov: 1.390 (približno)