

Trauma Exposures Among RCMP Cadets During Training

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Why study PPTEs During the Cadet Training Program?

No known studies have examined potentially psychologically traumatic event (PPTE) exposures during recruit training and the associated impacts on mental health. Determining when career-related PPTE exposures begin to accumulate can inform additional opportunities to increase the safety and well-being of cadets during the Cadet Training Program (CTP).

Background

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) evidence a high prevalence of PPTE exposures and mental health disorders.

Longstanding notions suggest that mental health challenges among RCMP are the result of lifetime PPTE exposures (i.e., prior to service) and preexisting mental health concerns. Recent evidence indicates that new RCMP cadets starting the CTP report fewer PPTE exposures and better mental health than experienced RCMP members and the general public.

The Current Study

The current research draws on data from RCMP cadets (n=449) who were participants from the larger RCMP Longitudinal PTSD Study. Participants self-reported PPTE exposures (including type, frequency, and exposure modality) and mental health disorder symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD), Panic Disorder (PD), and Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) following the CTP.

The current study was designed to: 1) assess PPTE exposures experienced by cadets during the CTP; 2) compare PPTE exposures across sociodemographic characteristics (i.e., gender, sex, age); and, 3) examine for associations between PPTE exposures and mental health disorder symptoms.

Results

Most participants reported no PPTE exposures (n = 374, 83.3%) during the CTP. Cadets who did report PPTE exposures during the CTP, most frequently reported exposure to serious transportation accidents, physical assault, and sudden accidental death.

The total number of PPTE types reported during the CTP was associated with increased risk for any mental health disorder and positively associated with PTSD, MDD, and GAD symptoms.

Prevalence of PPTE exposures by type:

PPTE Type	% (n)
Serious Transportation Accidents	6.0 (27)
Physical Assault	5.8 (26)
Sudden Accidental Death	5.1% (23)

Conclusion

The results provide novel evidence of cadet PPTE exposures during the CTP. The current results highlight how PPTE exposures can accumulate as early as training, increase the risk for mental health disorders, and warrant action to mitigate mental health challenges among cadets during training and onward throughout their careers.

**The original wording of the study was changed and condensed for the current research infographic.*

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Read the full study here:

Andrews, K. L., Maguire, K. Q., Jamshidi, L., Afifi, T. O., Nisbet, J., Shields, R. E., Teckchandani, T. A., Asmundson, G. J. G., Brunet, A., Lix, L. M., Sauer-Zavala, S., Sareen, J., Keane, T. M., Neary, J. P., & Carleton, R. N. (2025). Royal Canadian Mounted Police cadets' exposure to potentially psychologically traumatic events during the Cadet Training Program. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 38(2), 234–246. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.23115>



The RCMP Longitudinal
PTSD Study



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