Police Officer Mental Health 2020

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Overview

- Survey of current Utah Police Officers which measured perceived stress increases due to current, high profile, events
- Relied upon self-reporting
- Officers from several agencies from multiple counties in Utah
- Our goal was to determine if our hypothesis that riots, "defund the police," and negative news coverage caused increased stresses on law enforcement and their families
- Data showed increased in felt stress was experienced by majority of respondents

Research Questions

- 44 questions related to mental health, stress, coping mechanisms, and demographic information
- Qualtrics was used to design and disseminate information
- Answers were gathered anonymously
- Questions were designed to reduce trauma responses while gathering pertinent data
- Full listing of questions and responses added to the end of presentation

Research Design- How We Collected the Data

- Started with a consent statement
- Questions were often multiple choice and some true/false and short answer
- Skip logic was used to gather further detail on affirmative answers to certain questions
- Survey was designed to maintain flow and be efficient to increase response rates
- Survey was distributed via an anonymous link so that all responses would not contain any identifying information
- Data was collected from responses and interpreted by our research team

Sample Size

- 18 law enforcement agencies of various sizes were originally selected by the team
- Agencies were contacted to get Chief/Sheriff/Executive consent for participation
- Ultimately only 8 agencies opted in, some were unable to be contacted, others declined participation
- Sample size from size of sworn officers across the 8 agencies is approximately 400-450 officers

Confidence Interval and Level

Due to the style of the data collection being self-reporting of self-perceived increases in stress, we are not able to determine a confidence interval and level. The anonymous nature of data collection is believed to have increased likelihood of truthful answers as efforts were made to offer no incentive for deceptive responses to be given.

Response Rate

- Of the estimated 450 officers that the survey was distributed to we had 184 responses
- Due to the anonymous link, we cannot determine if all 8 agencies distributed the survey to the officers
- 184 responses from a sample size of 450 puts it at just over a 40% response rate
- Some responses indicate that the anonymous link may have even been shared by participants to other officers not in the original sample population
- Not something we anticipated or prepared a control for and it's not possible for us to determine with certainty due to the anonymity of the survey data collection
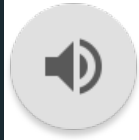
Demographic Questions

-**Agency's Jurisdiction:**

- city/town: 75
- County: 88
- State: 2

-**Age range** differed for the participants. We had participants from age 23 to age 50. However, the majority of the participants fell in between the ages of 29-44.

-As for the **years of service,** the years ranged from 1 year of service to 30 years.

-We had a number of different divisions within in a department participate. These **assignments** included patrol, investigations, Drug Task Force, Special Victim Units, Traffic, Community Oriented Policing, administration, and other speciality.

Riots-Question 3

Q3 Since the riots/protests against police started, have you felt any increase in hyper- awareness?
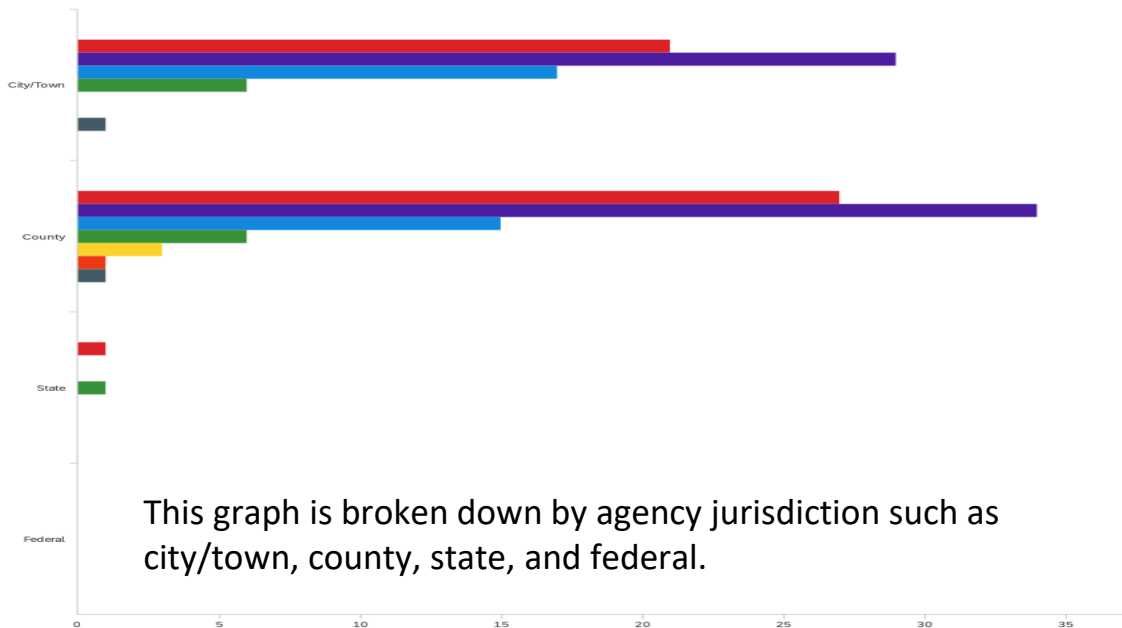
Legend:
Strongly Agree
Agree
Somewhat Agree
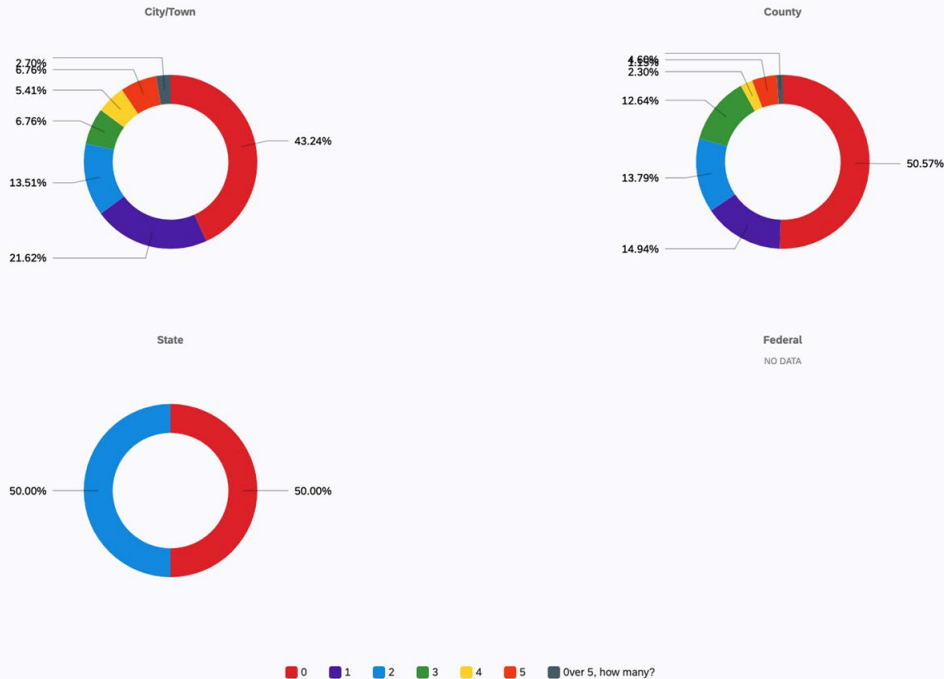Neither agree or disagree
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

This graph is broken down by agency jurisdiction such as city/town, county, state, and federal.

Riots- Question 13

Q13 - How many protests have you responded to have become violent or been characterized as a protest in 2020?

This graph displays which agency responded to riots in 2020.

Riots- Question 14

Q14 - How many protests have you responded that have become violent or characterized as a riot prior to 2020?

This graph has been broken down by assignments within a department

Patrol
- 1.92%
- 5.77%
- 7.69%
- 84.62%

Investigations
- 5.56%
- 94.44%

Traffic
- 100.00%

Community Policing
- NO DATA

Drug Task Force
- 100.00%

Special Victims Unit
- 100.00%

Administration
- 4.76%
- 4.76%
- 9.52%
- 80.95%

Other specialty
- 4.76%
- 3.17%
- 92.06%

Legend: 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Over 5, how many?

Spouse Related Stress- Question 4

Q4 - Have the riots/protests against police cause your spouse/significant other, increased stress?

Strongly agree

8.70%
26.09%
65.22%

Agree

3.13%
40.63%
56.25%
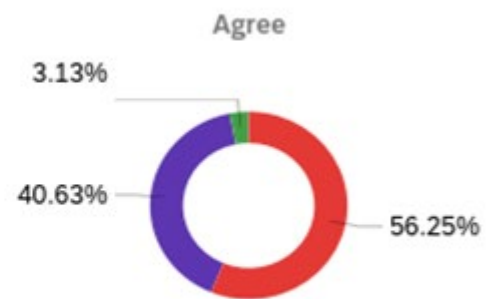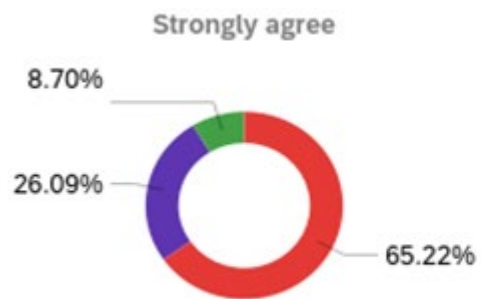
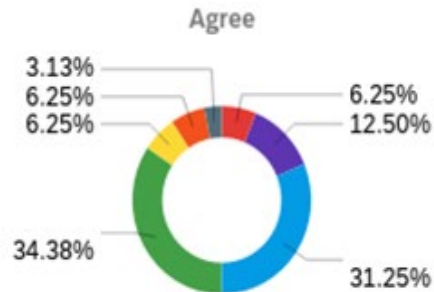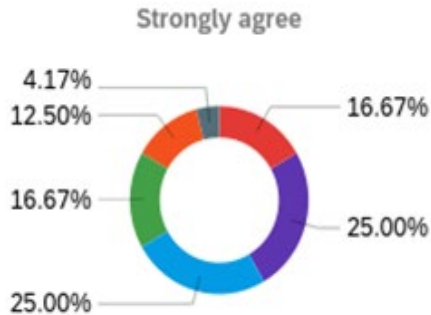Red- Strong agree
Blue- Agree
Green- Neutral

Spouse Related Stress- Question 5

Q5 - Has this stress caused a greater strain on your relationship with your spouse/significant other?

Strongly agree

8.70%
4.35%
17.39%
34.78%
21.74%
13.04%

Agree

6.25%
12.50%
18.75%
3.13%
9.38%
25.00%
25.00%
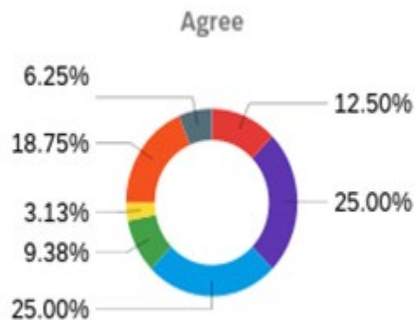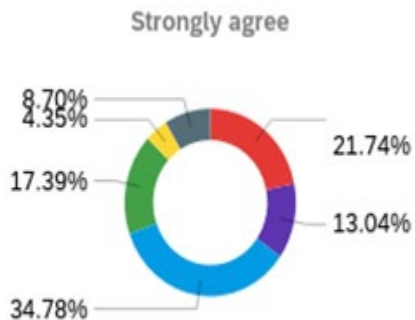
Red- Strongly agree
Bue- agree
Green- Neutral
Light blue- Some agree

Spouse Related Stress- Question 7

Q7 - Have the mood changes caused any difficulty in your personal or work

Red- Strongly agree
Bue- agree
Green- Neutral
Light blue- Some agree

Officer's Stress-Question 6

Q6 - Have you noticed any significant changes in your mood since the beginning of the riots/protests against police?


Broken down by assignments, we can see how changes in moods in different positions have been affected.
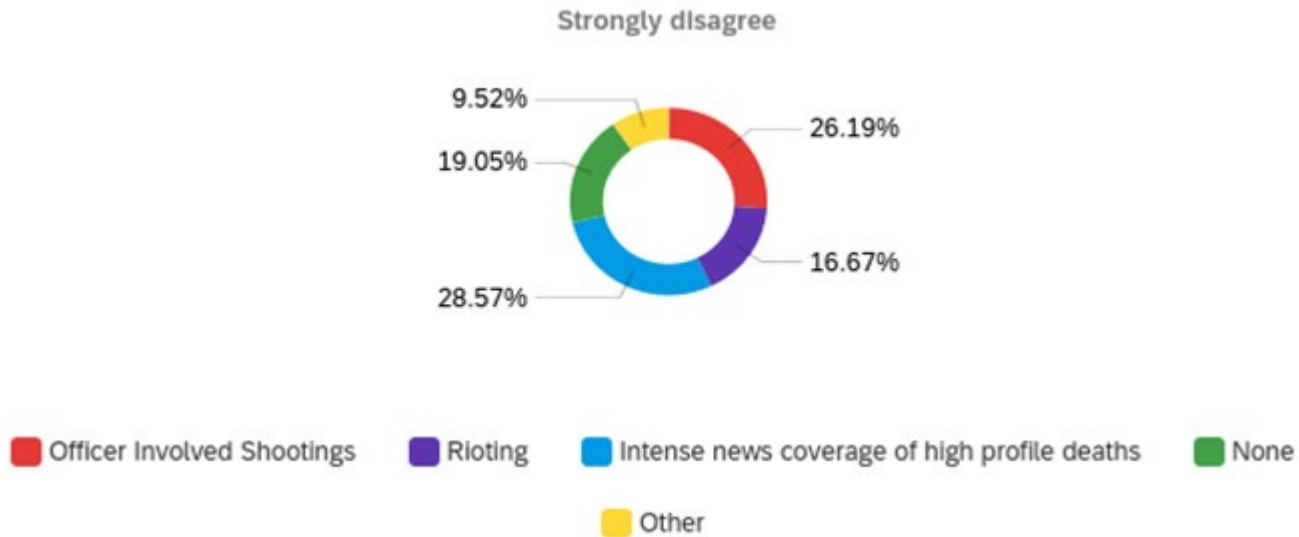
Officer's Stress-Question 19

Q19 - On a scale of one to 10, with 10 being highest, how much of an impact have recent events (as mentioned above) affected your mental health? *For the purposes of this survey, Mental Health is defined as the absence of mental strain, stress or anxiety*
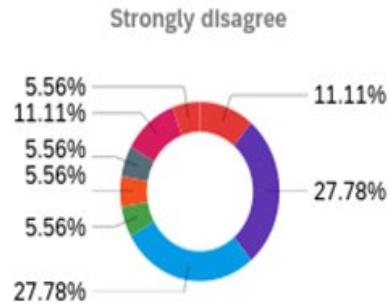
Officer's Stress- Question 20

Q20 - Which other events have had a significant impact on your mental health? Mark all that apply.

Strongly disagree

9.52% — 26.19%
19.05%
28.57% — 16.67%

Officer Involved Shootings | Rioting | Intense news coverage of high profile deaths | None
Other

Officer's Stress- Question 28

Q28 - Is your stress higher now than compared the the average over the course of your career?
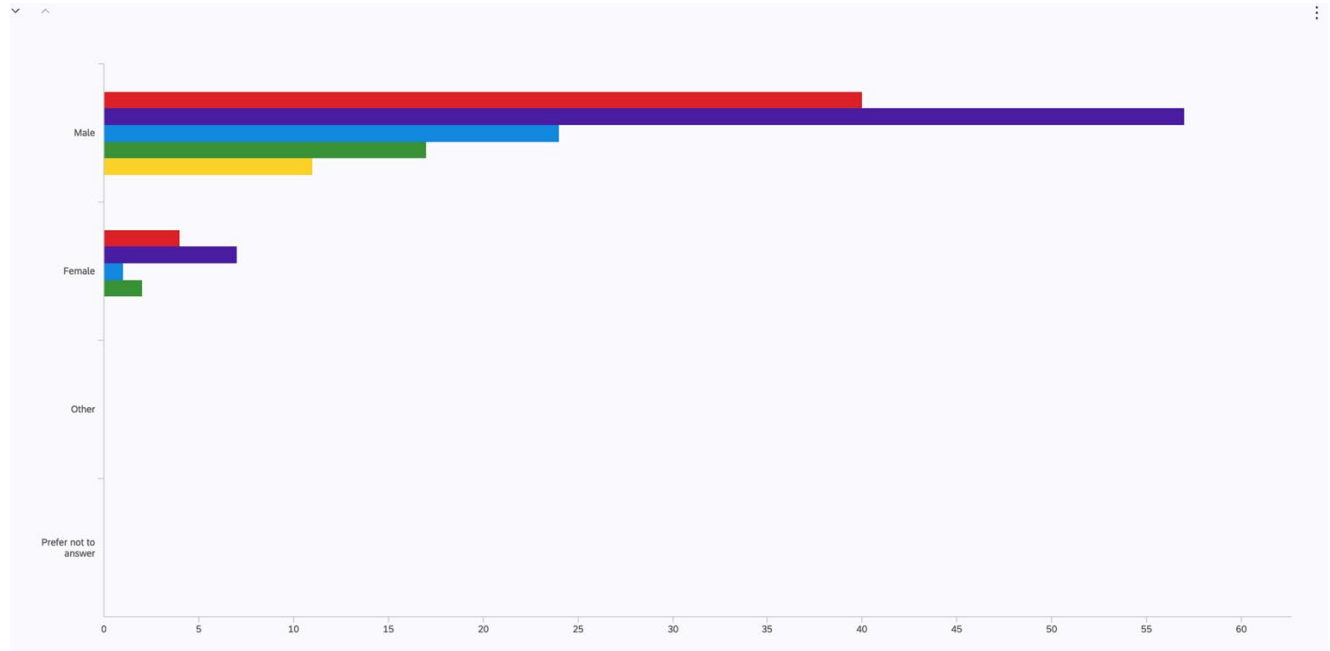
Legend:
Definitely Yes
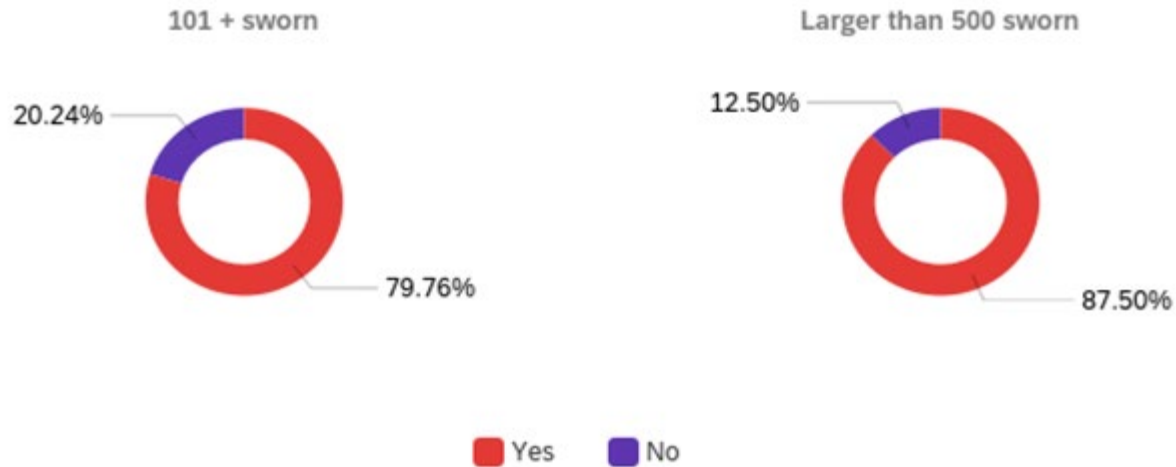Probably Yes
Might or might not
Probably Not
Definitely Not

*We wanted to showcase the specific of how gender has been affected.

Question 2-Media/New

Q2 - Has recent media coverage of law enforcement given you second thoughts about being an officer?

Social Media-Question 8

Q8- Do you currently have any social media accounts?

101 + sworn

20.24%

79.76%

Larger than 500 sworn

12.50%

87.50%

As you can see the majority of officers have social media accounts

Yes No

Social media- Question 9

Q9 - Have the recent riots, defund the police movement, racial, and police brutality issues affected the way you operate on, or view, social media?
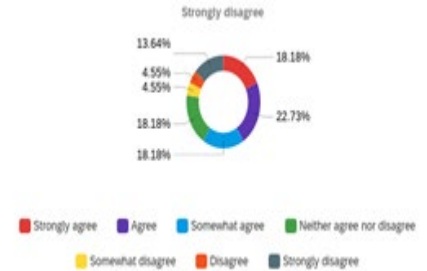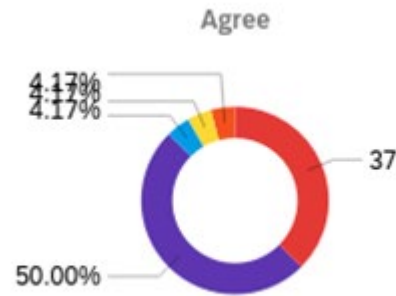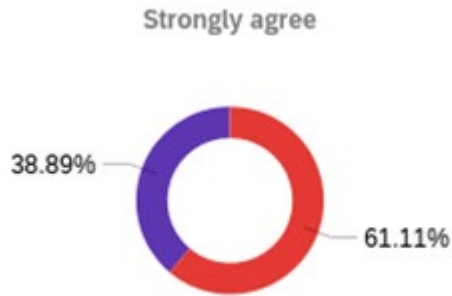
Social Media- Question 10

Q10 - How have you changed your social media habits?

Conclusion

-Have seen an increase in officer's stress which include mental health and spouse related stress.

-However, some of the data can suggest that those who have been serving longer is not affected by the recent events

-This data does favor those who have who are new or fairly new