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Examining First Responders' Mental Health

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Examining First Responders' Mental Health

Taylor Richmond

Daryl R. Van Tongeren (Faculty Sponsor)

- ❑ Terror Management Theory describes the existential angst that humans feel with the understanding that death is inevitable and it assists in explaining why humans develop religious beliefs, how numerous religious orientations address universal existential concerns, and what the social consequences are (Vail et.al, 2010).
- ❑ Religiosity is seen as a protective factor against negative mental health issues (Vail et. al, 2010).
- ❑ Past research (Rowden, Harris, & Wickel, 2014) asserted that *willingness* to change is affected by humility.
- ❑ The purpose of our research was to understand the function of religion in the ways that it affects terror management processes and managing existential concerns.
- ❑ First responder mental health is extremely understudied so it is important to further the research.

Method- 4 Studies (1A, 1B, 2A and 2B)

Participants

Study 1A: 189 Amazon Mechanical Turk workers

Study 1B: 211 first responders (police, fire, and ambulance staff) from Michigan

Study 2A: 119 Amazon Mechanical Turk workers

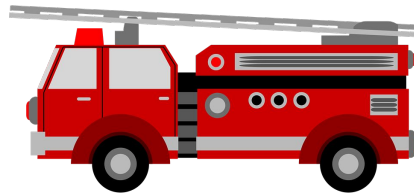
Study 2B: 75 first responders (police, fire, public safety, and ambulance staff) from Texas

Study 1 Method: Mortality Salience

Study 2 Method: Humility Prime

General Procedure

Participants were asked to complete measures for mental health such as anxiety (death anxiety and clinical anxiety), depression, and PTSD, as well as willingness to seek therapy



Results and Conclusion



We had 2 main findings between all 4 samples.

Finding 1: The first responders reported better mental health than the general population, represented by the Mechanical Turk Workers

Finding 2: The humility prime increased willingness to seek therapy among first responders.

Table 3

Mental health, death anxiety, and religiosity means in first responders (1B) compared to the general population (1A)

Measure Means	First Responder	Mechanical Turk	<i>t</i> -test comparison
Intrinsic Religiousness	2.98 (.82)	3.13 (.77)	$t(358) = -1.713, p = .088$
Depression	1.99 (.70)	2.18 (1.09)	$t(359) = -1.980, p = .049$
Anxiety	2.20 (.78)	2.24 (1.08)	$t(259.063) = -.455, p = .649$
PTSD	1.98 (.78)	2.18 (1.05)	$t(359) = -2.145, p = .033$
Death Anxiety	2.29 (.85)	3.01 (1.14)	$t(359) = -6.840, p < .001$
Positive RCOPE	3.08 (1.14)	3.01 (1.33)	$t(294.534) = -.513, p = .608$
Negative RCOPE	1.87 (.90)	2.30 (1.23)	$t(359) = -3.795, p < .001$

Note. Bold text indicates significant differences.

Table 4

Mental Health, Death Anxiety, and Willingness to Attend Therapy or Admit Mental Health Struggles in First Responders (2B) Compared to Mechanical Turk Workers (2A)

Measures	First Responders	MTurkers	<i>t</i> -test comparison
Depression	2.11 (.88)	2.45 (1.29)	$t(189.128) = -2.152, p = .033$
Anxiety	2.26 (.86)	2.53 (1.26)	$t(189.216) = -1.771, p = .078$
PTSD	1.99 (.77)	2.53 (1.12)	$t(190.594) = -3.801, p < .001$
Death Anxiety	2.17 (.81)	3.59 (1.25)	$t(190.667) = -9.564, p < .001$
Willingness to Attend Therapy	63.00 (32.89)	47.44 (34.16)	$t(191) = 3.121, p = .002$
Willingness to Admit Mental Health Struggles	64.78 (33.05)	53.87 (31.90)	$t(191) = 2.280, p = .024$

Note. Bold text indicates significant differences.