Difference in Physical Characteristics and Fitness of Recruits from Smaller Versus Larger Law Enforcement Agencies
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Larger law enforcement agencies (LEAs) will often hold academy training classes that include recruits hired by the large agency (LA), and recruits hired by smaller agencies (referred to as paragovernment or ancillary agencies). Ideally, recruits should have adequate levels of physical fitness prior to academy as higher levels of fitness predict successful completion of academy training. However, LA that need to fill more positions may have recruits with a wider range of fitness levels. The purpose of this study is to compare the physical characteristics and fitness of incoming law enforcement recruits from a LA and PA prior to academy. Retrospective analysis was conducted on eight academy classes, with a total of 581 recruits (481 males, 100 females). Physical characteristics measured were: age (LA = 27.47 ± 6.55 years; PA = 27.13 ± 4.79 years), height (LA = 175.71 ± 8.22 cm), and body mass (LA = 80.45 ± 13.51 kg, PA = 81.34 ± 20.57 kg). The fitness tests included: push-ups and sit-ups completed in 60 s; vertical jump (VJ); 400-meter ball throw (MMT); 75-yard shuttle test (MSFT). A univariate analysis of variance (p < 0.05), with sex as the covariate, was conducted to determine the differences between LA (p = 0.10) and PA (p = 0.70) recruits. There was a significant difference in push-ups and sit-ups between LA and PA, with recruits from the PA performing significantly more repetitions in the push-up (p = 0.01) and sit-up (p = 0.01). In addition, there were significant differences between LA and PA recruits, and LEA staff should recognize that differences that may exist in recruits from different positions may exist between academy classes. This research aimed to determine any fitness differences that may exist among academy classes before academy training to inform specific training needs.

**METHODS**

**RESULTS**

- Figure 1 displays the data for the number of push-up and sit-up repetitions completed by the LA and PA recruits. There was a significant difference in push-ups between LA and PA, with recruits from the PA performing significantly more repetitions in the push-up tests. There was also a significant difference in sit-ups between LA and PA, with recruits from the PA also performing more repetitions for sit-up repetitions completed in sit-up tests.

- There were no significant differences between LA and PA recruits in the other fitness tests conducted, and these data are shown in Table 2.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- The differences in the strength endurance tests may be indicative of the larger variation within a greater hiring pool to fill vacant positions for the LA in this study, leading to a greater range of fitness levels in their recruits.
- The Cooper Institute suggests the number of push-ups and sit-ups performed in 60 s is predictive of performing job tasks in most cases. Muscular endurance in the upper body and core are well measured in these two fitness tests. It is possible that PA recruits could perform job tasks relating to muscular endurance at a higher level than recruits from LA.
- This analysis reveals the possibility PA could be more selective in their hiring process if there are more applicants than positions, although this cannot be confirmed from this study.
- Nonetheless, due to select fitness differences between LA and PA recruits, LEA staff should recognize that differences that may exist in recruits from different agencies prior to training.
- Future analysis is needed to determine any fitness differences that may exist between academy classes prior to academy training is influenced by training advice provided by the agency, or more selective hiring practices.

**References**