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## Police Injuries in Profile

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*Recommended citation(APA):*  
Lyons, K., Orr, R. M., Pope, R. R., & Stierli, M. (2017). *Police Injuries in Profile*. APA National Physiotherapy Conference MOMENTUM 2017, Sydney, Australia.

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# Police injuries in profile

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# Introduction

- In tactical populations such as the military and fire-fighters the lower extremity contributes between 31.7% and 66.5%.
- In the current law enforcement literature the lower extremity contributes between 13.2% and 29.7%.



# Introduction

- Law enforcement personnel are required to perform tasks carrying loads which can range from 3-15kg.
- They can be required to perform arduous tasks in situations that are unpredictable and can be life threatening in some circumstances.
- Therefore they may be at a higher risk of musculoskeletal injury when compared to many other occupations.



## Aim

- To determine the musculoskeletal profile of lower extremity injuries within a state law enforcement agency.





## Methods

- Retrospective cohort study
- Data were collected by the NSW Police Force over a 7-year period (2009 - 2016). Data not meeting the specific definitions for musculoskeletal injury were excluded using a tiered system with data cleaned to ensure no incomplete entries and recoded to improve data integrity.
- Ethics approved by Bond University HREC, Protocol Number RO15360, with compliant consent waiver



# Methods

- Definitions
  - Injury: ‘harm to the body which occurred as a result of energy applied to the body whilst on duty’
  - MSK injuries: ‘injuries/incidents of a musculoskeletal nature, affecting the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints and cartilage’
  - Lower extremity: ‘injuries to toe/s, foot, ankle, knee, groin, hip/s, leg-upper, leg-lower and leg-not classified’



# Methods

- Data Analysis
  - Initially completed descriptively
    - Frequencies determined and means with standard deviations (SD) where applicable
  - Chi-square tests of independence (R x C)
    - Key descriptive variables between genders
  - Cramer's V then calculated
    - Strength of any significant association
    - Level of significance set at  $< .001$



## Results

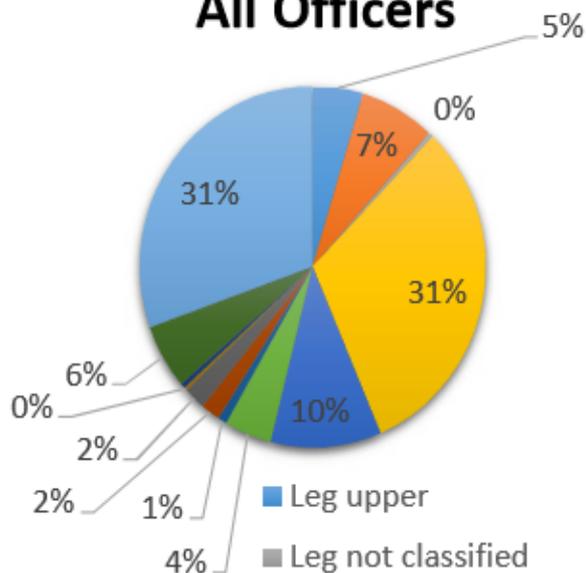
Of the initial 65,579 incidents:

- 12,452 (19%) were musculoskeletal lower limb incidents.
- The knee was the most commonly injured site (31.4%)
- Sprains and strains were the most common nature of injury (42.3%)
- Arresting offenders (24.2%) was the most common cause of injury.
- Slips/trips/falls (37.8%) were found to be the most common cause of injury

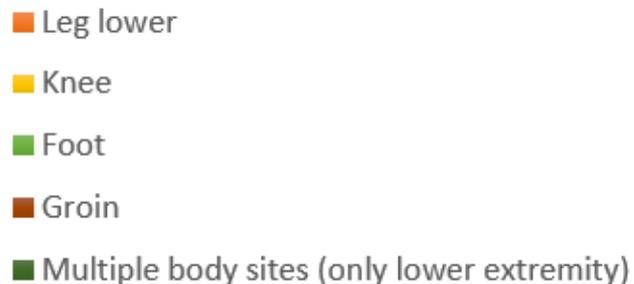
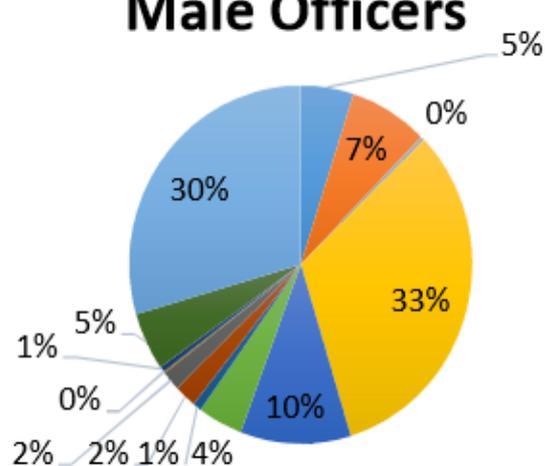
# Results

## Body Site by frequency

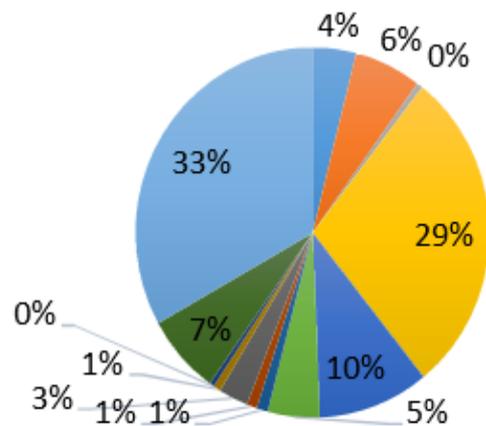
### All Officers



### Male Officers



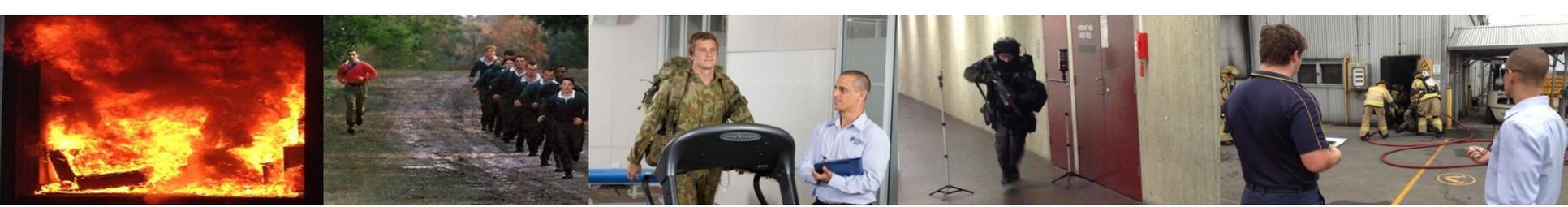
### Female Officers





## Results

- Variations were found between gender. Most notably within the incident activity ( $p < .001$ ), where males had a 10.6% higher rate for arresting an offender and females an 8.6% higher rate for walking/running.
- The mean number of hours worked prior to injury was  $6.12 \pm 3.96$ , mean shift length =  $10.34 \pm 3.52$  hours.



## Discussion

- The leading sites of injuries (knees and ankles) were similar to that of other tactical populations.
- The tendency for injuries to occur later in a shift suggest that fatigue may play a part.



## Discussion

- For any Police Force unit, injuries have consequences that can range from a couple of days for recovery and rehabilitation to longer periods of with many lost working days and increased future injury risk.
- Evidence based lower extremity injury reduction measures and return-to-work protocols may be of use in this population. Work hardening should include specific tasks (like arresting an offender) and progress to functionality over a full shift length.



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