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PROFILING THE INJURIES SUSTAINED BY RECRUITS DURING POLICE FORCE RECRUIT TRAINING

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Aim: The aim of this study was to profile injuries occurring within a national police force during initial training to inform injury prevention strategies.

Design: A retrospective cohort study.

Method: Data pertaining to injuries suffered during a 22-month training period at a national police college were received. Injury data included location, nature, mechanism and the activity being performed when the injury was suffered.

Results: A total of 564 injuries were recorded over the 22-month period, with the mean age of recruits reporting an injury being 28.83 years \pm 6.9 years. The incidence of injuries ranged from 456.25 to 3079 injuries per 1000 person-years with an overall incidence rate of 1550.15 injuries per 1000 person-years overall. The shoulder was the most commonly injured site (n=113, 20% of injuries), with sprains and strains being the most common nature of injury (n=287, 50.9% of injuries). Muscular stress with physical exercise was the most common mechanism of injury (n=175, 31.0% of injuries) with the activity responsible for the majority of injuries occurring during an 'unknown' (n=256, 25.4% of injuries) followed by police training (n=215 (38.1%).

Conclusion: Injuries appear to be joint related and common to the shoulder with police training being a primary known activity at the time of injury.

Key Practice Points:

- Injury minimization programs (e.g. pre-screening protocols) should target the shoulder prior to police training activities.
- Injuries, especially to the shoulder, that occurred pre-enlistment or during training must be fully rehabilitated prior to trainee return-to-training and commencement as a qualified officer.

Proposed impact, if any, on the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: The results of this research are likely to have no greater impact on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population above that of the non-Indigenous population