

The Effects of Physiological Impairment on Police Behavior

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Introduction

Policing reform is built on an idea that if communities trust their police, civilians would be more likely to help. Civilians only trust police if they feel the job is being done correctly.

How does impaired physiology, through fatigue and hunger, affect police behavior?

Methods

Using virtual reality simulations of policing scenarios, I investigate the effects of being fatigued and over-hungry on police officer disrespect in interactions.

n = 37

Findings

Hypothesis 1- Fatigue increases likelihood of disrespectful behavior

Supported

	7 or more hours of Sleep (Percentage)	Less than 7 Hours of Sleep (Percentage)
No Presence of Disrespectful Behavior	5 (13.51)	6 (16.22)
Presence of Disrespectful Behavior	9 (24.32)	17 (45.94)

Hypothesis 2- Hunger increases likelihood of disrespectful behavior

Inconclusive

	Eaten within 8 hours (Percentage)	Not Eaten within 8 hours (Percentage)
No Presence of Disrespectful Behavior	3 (8.1)	8 (21.62)
Presence of Disrespectful Behavior	13 (35.13)	13 (35.13)

Hypothesis 3- Physiological impairment increases likelihood of disrespectful behavior

Supported

	Not Physiologically Impaired (Percentage)	Physiologically Impaired (Percentage)
No Presence of Disrespectful Behavior	2 (5.41)	9 (24.32)
Presence of Disrespectful Behavior	3 (8.11)	23 (62.16)

Results

86.49% of officers were either hungry or fatigued

70.26% of officers were disrespectful in a scenario

Physiological impairment increases the likelihood of disrespectful behavior

Conclusions

This research shows that something as simple as eating or sleeping at proper levels can positively impact officer behavior.

Policy implications can include mandatory sleep requirements and meal-time which police unions would likely support.



LAB FOR APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH

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Further information

Please visit <https://bit.ly/3xMG6xp> to read this paper in full
Data come from the Lab for Applied Social Sciences Policing study
Research completed as Honors Thesis for the Criminology and Criminal Justice Honors Program