The Reaction Of Body On Stress

The body's reaction to stress is a safety mechanism of which the brain is the key component in order to determine whether a situation is threatening or not. Research has shown how stress and stress hormones produce both adaptive and maladaptive counteractions throughout the hippocampus, amygdala, and prefrontal cortex which executes stress-induced organizational reconstruction each time an individual is directly or indirectly faced with a stressor in order to adapt (Radley, Morilak, Viau & Campeau, 2015). Paramedics come up against perplexing physical and mental challenges throughout their careers. While the line of work can be extraordinarily gratifying, the psychological stress can be immense. This psychological stress is at an elevated level due to the involvement of traumatic situations and isolation; which may include working in rural areas away from family and friends, long hours, and the constant repetitive stressors with minimal decompression time between jobs.

According to Varker et al., (2017) emergency services personnel are at high risk for particular work stressors to develop overtime towards what is called 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As there is a perceived expectation from the public and at the organizational level that stress is an inherent and expected portion of the job; however, paramedics are having a miscarriage of justice carried out by their organisations, as portrayed by the statistics of Ambulance Victoria, (2016, p.9) with high and increased rates of mortality due to PTSD. Paramedicine is one of the top 5 'most at risk' occupations in regard to mental health claims throughout Australia (Australian Federal Government, 2019). As reported in the article of Cooper, Metcalf & Phelps, (2014) the Australian prevalence rates for PTSD are 7.2%. Moreover, a systematic review and meta-analysis study that was conducted on an international scale has Australian ambulance personnel more than doubling the average Australian community at an overwhelming 14.8% prevalence of PTSD (Petrie et al., 2018).

Reducing stress and improving mental wellbeing can have a number of benefits from increasing performance, strengthening relationships, reducing sick leave, and minimizing clinical practice errors for patients. Stress reduction interventions diverge into two separate levels; individual-level interventions and organizational-level interventions. The individual level involves a paramedic seeking interventions such as 'Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) which encourages behavioural responses to adapt and develop a positive perception toward a certain stressor (Fenn & Byrne, 2013). Mindfulness therapy is primarily focused on adapting positive responses by understanding and detecting maladaptive responses by dissociating negative thoughts and emotions. Organizational-level interventions aim to eliminate sources of stress by implementing new practices and policies. Employees that are able to participate throughout redesigns initiatives towards procedures help with decreasing stress by gaining a level of job control (Holman, D., Johnson, S., & O'Connor, E., 2018).

Consequently, it should be known that due to the inherently stressful nature of the job of a paramedic same organizational-level interventions simply are not feasible such as witnessing or intervening in traumatic events. The need for this research question to be investigated and reviewed is essential in order to achieve improved health outcomes for paramedics which will have a beneficial increase to the health outcomes for patients in the community.