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The physical fitness profiles of specialist policing teams

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Poster Presentations Friday Lunchtime, Exhibition Hall, October 6, 2023, 12:20 PM - 1:02 PM

Aim: To profile the fitness of two groups of Australian Specialist Police.

Design: Retrospective Cohort Study

Method: De-identified data of 17 male specialist police officers from two specialist police response groups (Riot Squad (RS) and Police Tactical Group (PTG)) were provided. Data included demographics (age, height, and weight), strength (1 Repetition Maximum (1RM) bench press, deadlift, pull-up + Body Weight (BW), and squat), speed (0-10m acceleration & 10-20m peak velocity), agility (box agility drill), aerobic capacity (30-15 Intermittent Fitness Test) and power (bench throw and countermovement jump).

Results: There were no significant differences in demographics, although officers from RS were, on average, older (1.45yrs, $p=0.390$), shorter (-2.04cm, $p=0.15$), and lighter (-3.43kg, $p=0.55$) than PTG officers. PTG officers had significantly greater strength (1RM deadlift = 38.50kg, $p=0.001$, 95% CI [17.62-59.38], 1RM squat = 34.00kg, $p<0.001$, 95% CI [16.6-51.5], 1RM bench press = 26.83kg, $p=0.004$, 95% CI [9.8-43.8]) and quicker acceleration (0.11sec, $p=0.032$, 95% CI [0.01-0.21]) than RS officers. Both groups performed at a level comparable to elite athletes for most other measures.

Conclusion: Specialist police possess high levels of aerobic fitness, strength, acceleration, and power, with subtle differences between units, thought to be due to varying occupational roles. This study provides benchmarks for selection, return-to-work practices and maintenance programs for health professionals working within these units.

Key Practice Points:

- Specialist police possess fitness profiles comparable to elite athletes.
- Different occupational roles require different reconditioning prior to return-to-work following injury.