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**THE IMPACT OF TRAUMATIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL  
STRESSORS ON NEW ZEALAND POLICE RECRUITS:  
A LONGITUDINAL INVESTIGATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL  
HEALTH AND POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH OUTCOMES**

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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*Dedicated to Dad with love*  
He lived to see this thesis started  
but not completed

## ***ABSTRACT***

Police officers face exposure to traumatic events due to the inherent nature of their profession. As well, as with the employees of any large organization, they are subjected to daily organizational events within their workplace (resource concerns, interactions with co-workers, administrative hassles). Very little is known as to the extent to which these organizational events moderate the development of traumatic stress outcomes. Investigations of police well-being have almost inevitably focused on negative work events and their pathogenic consequences. However, this study seeks to widen this pathogenic orientation by also considering the impact of positive daily work events (uplifts), and by evaluating a possible salutogenic outcome; the development of posttraumatic growth.

A longitudinal methodology was utilized to establish baseline measures of traumatic event exposure (the TSS) and psychological well-being (the IES and the HSCL-21). All the 673 recruits who entered police college over one year were invited to participate in the study, and the 512 who completed the first questionnaire were reassessed one year later. The second questionnaire contained measures to assess the impact of the organizational environment (Uplifts and Hassles Scales), police traumatic events (a modified TSS), and posttraumatic growth outcomes (the PTGI).

Parametric analyses and hierarchical multiple regression were used to evaluate the study hypotheses and post-hoc analyses investigated moderating effects. The recruits entered the police with high levels of prior traumatic event exposure, which, during the following year substantially increased. Psychological health remained in a robust condition, and psychological distress did not increase, although officers who experienced on-duty and multiple traumatic events had significantly higher traumatic stress than those who did not. Other important findings were that the organizational environment contributed to psychological distress outcomes, and post-hoc analyses indicated that this had an important interrelationship with traumatic stress outcomes as well. Organizational uplifts had a salutogenic effect upon physical health, and aided the development of posttraumatic growth following traumatic exposure. This study has supported the development of a synthesized research orientation that combines salutogenic as well as pathogenic research methodologies.

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