

Prevalence and predictors of mental health in firefighters

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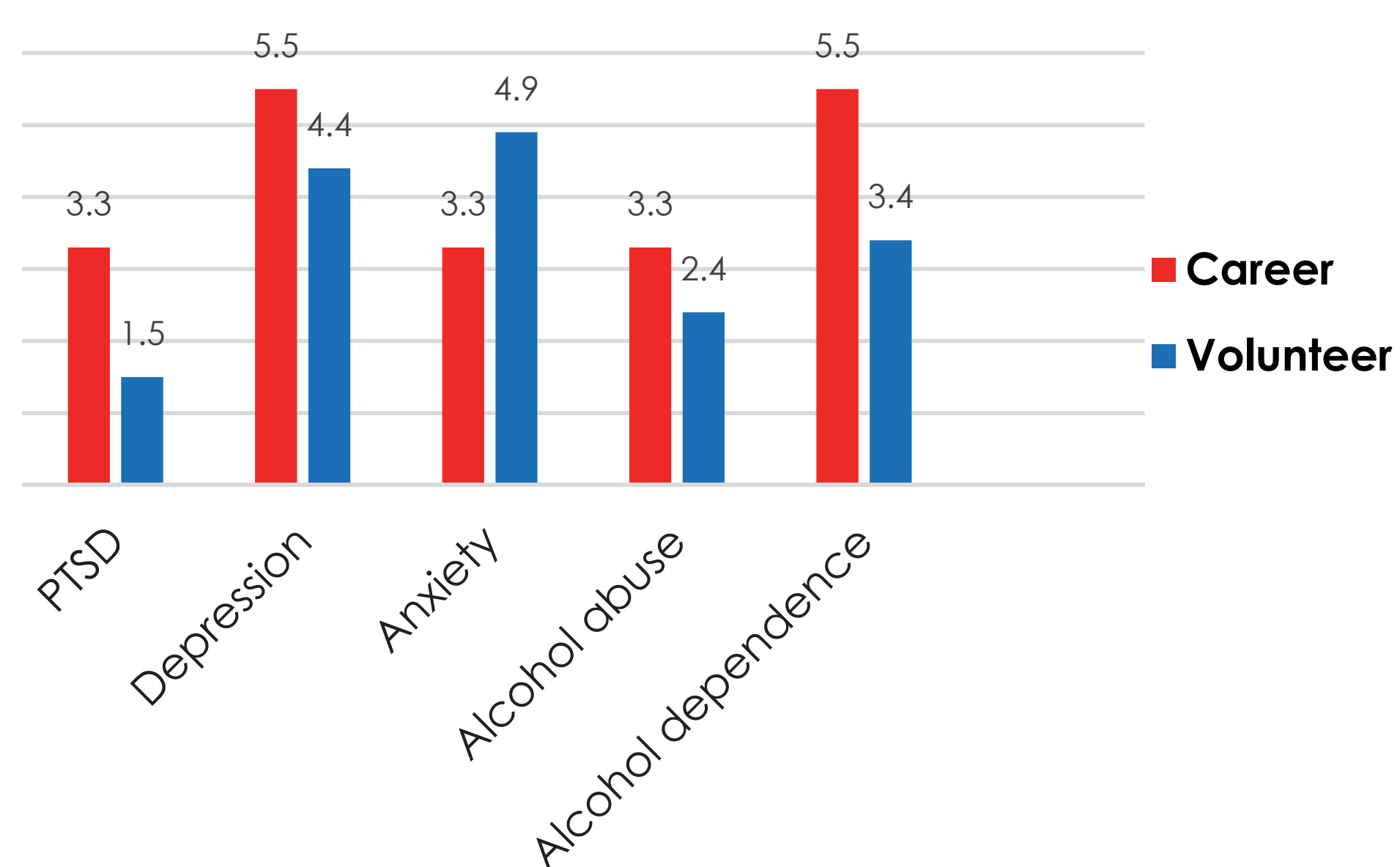
This study aimed to identify the prevalence and predictors of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety and alcohol misuse in firefighters. Predictor variables included exposure to potentially traumatic events (PTEs) as well as individual, operational and organisational factors.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the rates of PTSD, depression, anxiety and alcohol misuse among the firefighters who participated in this study?
- Does the mental health of the volunteer and career firefighters differ?
- How do the prevalence rates in this study compare with previous studies of firefighters and the general population?
- How do the following factors contribute to mental health and which one is most influential: individual /demographic, PTE exposure, operational & organizational factors?
- What are the implications of the findings for firefighters and fire services?



Prevalence rates (percentage) of mental health disorders based on 300 clinical interviews



General population rates (Slade et al, 2009)
PTSD: 4.6% (male); 6.4% (total) Depression: 3.1% (male); 4.1% (total) Anxiety: 2.0% (male); 2.7% (total) Alcohol abuse: 3.8% (male); 2.9% (total) Alcohol dependence 2.2% (male); 1.4% (total).

PARTICIPANTS

Longitudinal data from 335 volunteer and career firefighters from ACTF&R, ACTRFS, CFSSA & NTF&R completed the survey twice, 12 months apart. Multiple regression analyses produced the following findings:

PREDICTORS OF PTSD

Career firefighters	Volunteer firefighters
Baseline PTSD	Baseline PTSD
PTE exposure	
Low job satisfaction related to operational aspects of firefighting	

PREDICTORS OF DEPRESSION

Career firefighters	Volunteer firefighters
Baseline Depression	Baseline Depression
PTE exposure	PTE exposure
Low job satisfaction due to operational aspects of firefighting	Recent life events

PREDICTORS OF ANXIETY

Career firefighters	Volunteer firefighters
Baseline Anxiety	Baseline Anxiety
PTE exposure	PTE exposure
	Recent life events

PREDICTORS OF ALCOHOL USE DISORDER

Career firefighters	Volunteer firefighters
Baseline Alcohol use	Baseline Alcohol use
Rank – being a firefighter as opposed to a manager	Recent life events

END USER STATEMENTS

“I believe what you are proposing will be of great use to our industry ... ACT Fire and Rescue would be very keen to be involved in your study.”
Paul Swain AFSM Chief Officer ACT Fire and Rescue

“AFAC can see great value in this project and are very supportive and willing to be consulted as required.”
Stuart Ellis AM CEO AFAC