Depressive and Anxious Symptoms, Stress, Coping and Resilience in Probation Officers

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Introduction: There are no studies on psychological correlates on Probation Officers/PO in Portugal.

Objectives: analyze levels of depressive/anxiety symptoms, stress, coping and resilience in a PO sample; explore differences in these variables by gender, marital status, Regional Delegation and types of competences and associations between these variables and sociodemographic/professional variables.

Methods: 89 PO (females, 75.3 %; M = 47.4/SD = 7.10/range = 27-61) completed a sociodemographic-professional questionnaire, the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale/DASS-21, the Brief COPE and the Scale to assess Resilience.

Results: Women presented higher levels of Use of Instrumental and Emotional Support. Professionals from the Centre Delegation had higher scores on Resilience vs. the North Delegation; from the North Delegation had higher levels of Stress vs. the South and Islands Delegation; with mixed competence had higher levels of Anxiety vs. with specific competence. In the total sample, Depression was associated with Denial and Substances Use. In males, Use of Emotional Support and Instrumental Support correlated with Depression and Anxiety. In all Delegations, Resilience higher levels correlated with more positive coping strategies and Depression, Anxiety and Stress higher levels with lower levels of positive coping strategies and higher levels of negative coping strategies. Anxiety higher levels, either in mixed and specific competence teams correlated with higher levels of negative coping strategies.

Conclusions: Differences found accentuate aspects to address in an intervention with these professionals. Resilience higher levels were associated, as in other professionals, with more positive coping strategies and higher levels of symptoms with more negative coping strategies.

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