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## Analysis of particularities of law enforcement officers' poststress states, as the result of work in extreme conditions

The problem of professional activity of law enforcement officers has recently become burning. One of the typical signs of changes taking place in the country is the increase of the number of the extreme situations, their variability, their immensity and heaviness of losses. The growth of the ethnic and religious conflicts, economic and social tension in the society, and growth of the criminal danger have acquired special acuteness. The activity of law enforcement officers, fulfilling tactical and official duties in the areas of extreme situations, turns very often into a combat operation.

The extreme character of employment-related activity in the areas with states of emergency and armed conflicts aren't only dangerous for health, but for the life of

law enforcement officers. However, we think, the main role of menace to physical, as well as psychological health of law enforcement officers doesn't belong to objective danger and objective possibilities to oppose the threat, but to the subjective factor, which consists in their assessment of this situation.

In practice, law enforcement officers, facing real threat, are exposed to strong stress-factors. Traumatic stress is related to the particular form of general stress reaction. In the opinion of E.M. Tcherepanova, traumatic stress is the particular emotion, due to consequences of particular interaction of the man with the environment; this is the normal reaction to abnormal circumstances [Tcherepanova E.M., 1996].

The carried out researches testimony that the posttraumatic stress disorder is the disturbance, which affects several psychological and physiological levels, including biological, behavioral and cognitive components [Tarabrina N.V., Lazebnaya E.O., 1992].

Thus, the influence of extreme conditions of work upon law enforcement officers, upon posttraumatic stress disorders has a multifold, integral character, including not only objective psychological factors, has impact on the mental state of law enforcement officers (danger, suddenness, suspense, new means and ways of work in extreme conditions, speed of actions, lack of time) but mainly law enforcement officers' personality features, subjective factors of PTSD development.

At present they have accumulated a lot of materials related to mental states studies and its influence upon man's behavior in extreme situation (L.P. Grimak, F.E. Vassiluk, N.D. Levitov, V.I. Panov, P.B. Ganoushkin, E.K. Krsnoushkin, G. Celier, A.M. Stoliarenko, M.I. Mariin, I.V. Soloviev, O.M. Deriabina, S.N. Enikolopov, I.O. Kotenev, M.V. Levi, N.V. Tarabrina and others) However, it is necessary to point out, that the impact of the extreme situation upon law enforcement officers, as well as the mechanisms of development of post traumatic stress disorders, are still not enough studied at present.



Starting from the above mentioned facts, we conducted the empirical research, the chief goals of which were to study of behavioral reactions, individual and psychological particularities of the personality of law enforcement officers, experiencing post traumatic stress disorder. As the subject of our study we have taken individual psychological personality features and syndromes of posttraumatic states of law enforcement officers caused by the influence of the extreme situations in the employment related activity. The officers of criminal and penitentiary system of Russian Justice Department and the internal affairs bodies became the object of our study.

During the course of the study we used: self-assessment inventory of relations and emotions system of law enforcement officers, returned from the zone of local conflict; the questionnaire of traumatic stress by I. O. Kotenev; computer program of psychological surveys «Risk-Analytics»; the questionnaire of the character accentuations by Leonhard – Shmishek and the test MMPI.

We supposed that, there is an interrelation between posttraumatic stress disorder and eventful component of psychological traumatic experience «critical incident» of the extreme period, outerly observed behavior reactions, extreme individual professional experience, social and demographic, individual and psychological features of law enforcement officer's personality.

The conducted study let us make the following conclusions. The law enforcement officers who have combat experience are affected by strong posttraumatic stress. Among them the symptoms of avoidance of traumatic experience are of great importance.

The flashbacks of combat experience more, than other kinds of trauma, lead to the development of stable symptoms of growing tension, such as insomnia, irritation, difficulties of attention concentration, which didn't exist before trauma. In the long run law enforcement officers make disruptions at work and have difficulties in building social contacts.

Besides, in the course of the study we received data, according to which psychological trauma connected to work activity, comparing with other psychological traumatic situations, increases greatly anxiety of law enforcement officers when they communicate with their colleagues.

The results of the study showed the interrelation of PTSD-syndrome and unacceptable forms of addiction (alcohol, drugs), suicide, and even criminal behavior of law enforcement officers, having extreme experience of employment-related activity.

Thus, psychological consequences of the participance in the extreme situations are diverse according to their content, form and dynamics. Consolidating in personality structures and behavior, they determine their behavior many years after participation in war events. Negative consequences of psychologic traumatic experience, integrated into the whole symptom, create clinical picture of posttraumatic stress disorder.

To prevent these negative consequences of psychologic traumatic experience it is necessary to recourse to competent interference of psychologists specialized



in psychological prevention, psychological correction, to take active rehabilitation measures at early stages of posttraumatic stress syndrome. We suggest, that complex psychological and corrective influence on the personality with symptoms of PTSD must be made taking into consideration the character and degree of manifestation of defensive behavior. In its turn, the strategy of psychological correction should be based upon working-through traumatic episode, rebuilding of emotional contacts in interpersonal relations and cognitive analysis of basic attitudes.

#### **Literature**

1. Tarabrina N.V., Lazhebnaya E.O. Syndrome of posttraumatic stress disorders: actual state and problems // Psychological journal. 1992. V. 13. № 2. p. 14-29.
2. Tcherepanova E.M. Psychological stress. M.: Publishing center «Academy», 1996.