

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TYPES OF POLICE SERVICE AND THE LEVEL OF SKILLS IN SAVING HUMAN LIFE

According to the data presented by the European Resuscitation Council, the sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death in Europe. Annual nearly 700 000 people die from sudden cardiac arrest. Although a fairly sizable percentage of people who have suffered a cardiac arrest do not survive, the recent studies provide evidence of continuous improvement in long-term outcome of treatment after the occurrence of sudden cardiac arrest.

Police officers often witness the events in which lives are at risk as a result of various types of emergencies. The article presents the results of surveys conducted among police officers in 2016. The study involved a group of n=160 police officers from all four types of service in the police structures. One of the life-threatening conditions is undoubtedly a sudden cardiac arrest – this condition requires an immediate cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The obtained results were compared to the results of similar studies conducted among police officers in the years 2010-2015.

INTRODUCTION

Polish Police is a uniformed and armed formation, whose main task is, among others, to serve the public. This formation is mainly responsible for protecting the safety of people and to ensure the maintenance of public order¹. Among the many tasks carried out by the police the following ones can be distinguished:

- protection of health and life against unlawful attacks;
- protection of safety and public order;
- detection of crimes and offences and prosecuting perpetrators.

The Polish Police consists of four types of service:

- criminal;
- investigative;
- preventive;
- supportive.

Criminal police service carries out operational and reconnaissance-investigative tasks. This service performs tasks aimed to identify the perpetrators of crimes in the shortest possible timeframe and leads efforts to ascertain the whereabouts of wanted persons. **Investigative police service** performs tasks aimed at protecting human life and health, to ensure peace and order in public places, effective detection of offenses and the prosecution of their perpetrators. It also performs tasks related to the recognition of common crimes and criminogenic phenomena. **Preventive police service** performs the largest range of police activities, which include e.g. carrying out patrols, protecting convoys and services on duty, or immediate response to reported threats. This type of police service also performs tasks related to ensuring the safety of citizens – also in cooperation with local authorities. It is engaged in the widely understood preventive education aimed at informing the public about hazards and how to prevent crime and offenses. The main tasks of this type of service include the protection of human security and public order in different places and the planning and implementation of activities aimed at preparing police officers for actions in

the event of a major technical failure or natural disaster. **Supportive police service** carries out tasks related to support local units in terms of organizational, logistical and technical aspects.

Only a Polish citizen can join police ranks, a person of high repute, with no criminal record, enjoying full public rights, and who has obtained at least secondary education, and who above all, possesses both physical and mental abilities to serve in armed forces. The main characteristic feature of the armed formations is their special discipline, and a person who is a member of such a formation must be able to submit to the discipline. A person admitted to police service is directed to the 127-day long basic police training, carried out in one of the police schools in the country.

A graduate of the basic training can perform, among others, the following activities:

- determining the circumstances of the event and securing the crime scene;
- ensuring public safety and order in the place of service;
- undertaking interventions;
- providing first aid to people in health emergency;
- searching for persons and property;
- disclosure of the perpetrators of crimes and offenses;
- being on duty in convoys and facilities for detainees;
- taking necessary actions against road traffic users;
- fighting criminal phenomena;
- participating in activities related to the restoration of disturbed public order².

Graduates of the basic training for the first three years of work serve mainly in basic positions in the preventive service. After the completion of three years of the so-called preparatory service, the policemen carry out tasks in various types of services in all positions.

¹ see article 1 of the Act of 6 April 1990 on the Police (Journal of Laws of 1990 no. 30 item 179 with amendments).

² see Decision no. 244 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of 9 July 2014 amending the decision on the basic training programme (Journal of Laws KGP item 49 of the year 2014).

1. OWN RESEARCH

1.1. Methods

The study involved a group of n=160 police officers working in the country, in the particular types of service, from among whom 40 officers from each type of service had been singled out. The main objective of this study was to determine whether the type of the performed service affects the level of skills in saving human life represented by the police officers. The study was limited to diagnosing the level of skills to rescue people being in danger of suffering sudden cardiac arrest. The study used the method of experiment using simulation scenarios, a computer programme analysing the performance of activities and worksheets for skill assessment. The simulation was to create a situation where a police officer must provide assistance to a person who had been subjected to the worst possible state of immediate threats to health – sudden cardiac arrest. The role of the so-called *model* – simulating a person who experienced a sudden cardiac arrest, was played by a dummy with which police officers were also able to practice cardiopulmonary resuscitation (full-scale figure of an adult). Police officers in the course of their activities could use the following equipment (provided along with the dummy): a disposable mask, disposable gloves and an automated external defibrillator (AED). The analysis of performed resuscitation was conducted with the use of a professional computer programme in accordance with the 2015 guidelines for cardiopulmonary resuscitation. In order to ensure a high degree of credibility of the study, sheets of skills assessment were used to measure the activities carried out by police officers. During the evaluation of the skill levels of each of the officers they could receive a maximum of 15 symbolic points. During the analysis and interpretation stage of research results we adopted criteria consistent with the scale of assessment which is applicable to normal police trainings. A police officer who gained fifteen symbolic points received the highest note – “perfect” (6). A “very good” grade (5) received an officer who scored 14 or 13 symbolic points. The “good” grade (4) received the policeman who obtained 12 or 11 symbolic points and the “pass” grade (3) was given in the case of scoring ten or nine points. Obtaining 8 symbolic points was equal to the “acceptable” grade (2). Obtaining less than 8 points (i.e. gaining less than 53.33% of the total points from 100% of the highest possible score) was qualified for a “failing” grade (1).

The skill assessment sheet contained such elements as:

- securing the scene and their own safety;
- correct assessment of the state of consciousness;
- correct clearing of the airway and breath control;
- correct diagnosis of sudden cardiac arrest (the victim is unresponsive and not breathing normally);
- correct calling for emergency medical team;
- unveiling of chest during compressions;
- using the AED.

The quality of performed CPR was evaluated by a computer programme that analysed inter alia the following elements:

- the volume of breath;
- blowing air into the stomach;
- the ratio of compressions to breaths;
- depth of compressions;
- incorrect hands position;
- loosening the compressions (relaxation);
- the interval between cycles of compressions and breaths;
- frequency of compressions.

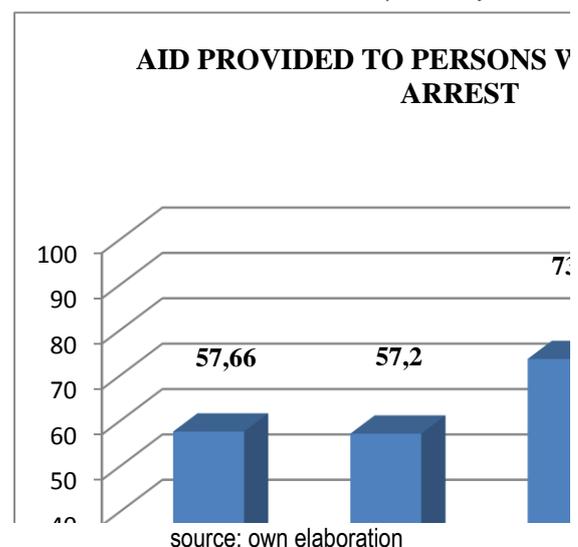
It is worth mentioning at this point that the guidelines for cardiopulmonary resuscitation in 2015 put particular emphasis on the appropriate pace of delivering resuscitation (100-120 compressions per minute) and compressing the chest to the right depth (5-6 cm).

During preparation stage for the tests the main research hypothesis had been adopted which stated that ***the nature of the duties in the police force does not affect the level of skill in saving human life***. This assumption was dictated by the fact that each person admitted to police service takes obligatory and the same for everyone basic police training and thus acquires the same skills. Due to uniform criteria required of all police officers – those concerning the rescue of persons from sudden cardiac arrest, the presented results of the research do not take into account the criteria of age, sex, years of service and education. The research results presented in the paper refer only to the type of the performed service in the police. The study was conducted in the first quarter of 2016.

1.2. Results

Analysing the obtained results it has been revealed that the police criminal service obtained an average cumulative points amounting to 57.66% out of 100% possible to get, and thus the group received the “pass” grade (3). A group of police officers from the investigative service received an average of 57.2% of cumulative percentage points, and also received the “pass” grade (3). Analysis of the results indicated that the police officers from the preventive service obtained an average of 73.66% of cumulative points from the possible 100%, and qualified for the “good” grade (4). The last assessed group – police supportive service – gained an average of 58.33% of the total points. Therefore, this type of service, similarly to the police criminal service and police investigative service, received the “pass” grade (3). The structure of the points obtained by the individual types of service in the police is presented in Figure 1.

Fig. 1. The average of cumulative points obtained by the particular types of police service in the course of assessment of the level of skills of cardiopulmonary resuscitation



1.3. Discussion

The research used the method of experiment, which made it possible to obtain the data necessary to carry out the analysis. As

experts believe, the experiment method is a test method used in the empirical sciences, where the researcher recreates the phenomenon they are interested in, and then observes and records the course and results of the processes under investigation³. With this in mind, the choice of the indicated test method made it possible to obtain objective test results. The results show that the level of skills of the rescue of persons in whom there has been diagnosed a sudden cardiac arrest varies depending on type of police service group to which particular police officers belong. Quite surprising is the fact that the differences are statistically significant only between the prevention service and the other three types of service. No significant differences between criminal, investigative and supportive services were observed. It is worth recalling that all police officers are subject to the same preparation for the basic vocational training and should have the same skills. According to the collected empirical material, the proportions between the preventive police service and other types of service are quite large – therefore the question arises "why is that so"? The high level of qualification of policemen in the preventive service may result primarily from the experience that they acquire in everyday service as these officers are often referred to as "the first line officers". During their service they constantly provide assistance to persons in case of an emergency. Moreover, the demands of society of this type of service can influence the need for self-education and training and thus help them maintain a high level of skills to save lives.

Police officers from the preventive service are often the first people on the scene and in many cases they are the people on whom human life depends in such situations. The analysis of the recently appearing media reports about the situations in which it is the police preventive service that saved human lives can confirm the high level of qualifications of officers. An example of this can be a policeman of preventive service in Brodnica, who in June 2016 during a festival carried out resuscitation on a woman in whom there had been a sudden cardiac arrest. This police officer had performed CPR until the emergency medical team arrived at the scene⁴. Another example can be police officers from the District Police Headquarters in Prudnik. In February 2016 they were called for an intervention – a man hanged himself in the attic of his apartment. The police officers cut off the rope on which the man was hanging, and then conducted CPR in the course of which the man regained his breath⁵. We can give yet another example where the policemen of Ścinawa city, who at the beginning of 2016 during the search for a missing woman found her, but she was unconscious and had no basic life functions. As a result of resuscitation they managed to restore the woman's breath⁶.

Knowledge of the principles of cardiopulmonary resuscitation by the police is repeatedly confirmed not only directly on-site, but also during calls on the emergency telephone line. An example of such a situation can be the duty officer at the Municipal Police Headquarters in Częstochowa, who on 6 June 2016 received a phone call from a distraught woman, explaining that her child is not breathing. The duty officer via the telephone gave her instructions

on how to conduct CPR⁷. What is more, the confirmation of formal qualifications by the police to carry out cardiopulmonary resuscitation can be the example of another duty officer of the district police station in Brodnica, who received a call from a desperate woman screaming into the phone that her child was suffocating. The frightened woman said that probably the reason for the lack of breathing is obstructed airways. The duty officer instructed the woman how to restore the child's breath⁸.

On the basis of a comparison of test results of research conducted among police officers in 2010 we can see significant changes in the level of preparation of police officers to help people whose life is in danger. These studies showed that only a modest proportion of officers were qualified to assist people who find themselves in a situation of sudden health threat⁹. The results of the research presented in this article show that most police officers have the necessary skills to help those in health emergency, which is sudden cardiac arrest. A thorough analysis of the obtained results showed that none of the police officers being assessed received a "failing" grade (1) in the course of determining the level of skills to carry out cardiopulmonary resuscitation. However, belonging to a particular type of the police service does have an impact on the level of those qualifications. The main hypothesis stated in the paper which says that the nature of the duties in the police force does not affect the level of skills in saving human life is not confirmed, as statistically significant difference between the level of skills of police officers from different types of services has been revealed. Therefore it can be assumed that the type of performed police service affects the level of skill in saving human life.

CONCLUSION

Results of the research presented herein show that the type of police service affects the level of skill in saving human life. These results are part of the material obtained in the course of the research task entitled *Assessment of preparation of detached units to provide first aid and cooperation with the "System of National Emergency Medical Services"*, the leader of which is the author of this paper. The research task is financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The collected data also helped to formulate the additional thesis that Polish Police officers have the necessary abilities to help people in health emergency.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Kupisiewicz C., Kupisiewicz M., *Słownik pedagogiczny*. Wydawnictwo naukowe PWN. Warszawa 2009.
2. Płaczek A., *Szkolenie i doskonalenie zawodowe policjantów w zakresie pierwszej pomocy* [in:] P. Bogdalski, D. Bukowiecka, R. Częścik, B. Zdrodowski (eds), *Grupy dyspozycyjne społeczeństwa w świetle potrzeb bezpieczeństwa państwa*. Vol. 3.

⁷ <http://www.policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/127425,Dyzurny-z-Czestochowy-pomogl-uratowac-dziecko.html>

⁸ <http://www.policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/121107,Dyzurny-udzielim-pomocy-przez-telefon-i-uratowal-zycie-niemowleciu.html?search=775546>

⁹ A. Płaczek, *Szkolenie i doskonalenie zawodowe policjantów w zakresie pierwszej pomocy*. [in:] P. Bogdalski, D. Bukowiecka, R. Częścik, B. Zdrodowski (eds), *Grupy dyspozycyjne społeczeństwa w świetle potrzeb bezpieczeństwa państwa*. Vol. 3. *Praktyczne aspekty przygotowania grup dyspozycyjnych państwa*. Szczytno 2014. pp. 249-266.

³ C. Kupisiewicz, M. Kupisiewicz, *Słownik pedagogiczny*. Warszawa 2009, p. 44.

⁴ <http://www.policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/127395,Brodnicki-policjant-w-czasie-wolnym-od-sluzby-reanimowal-kobietę-na-festynie.html>

⁵ <http://www.policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/122459,Policjanci-uratowali-zycie-27-latka.html>

⁶ <http://www.policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/122486,Nagrodzeni-za-uratowanie-zycia.html>

- Praktyczne aspekty przygotowania grup dyspozycyjnych państwa. Police Academy in Szczytno. Szczytno 2014.
3. Decision no. 244 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of 9 July 2014 amending the decision on the basic training programme (Journal of Laws KGP item 49 of the year 2014).
 4. Act of 6 April 1990 on the Police (Journal of Laws of 1990 no. 30 item 179 with amendments).
 5. <http://www.prc.krakow.pl/wyt2015/Podsumowanie.pdf>;
 6. <http://www.policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/127395,Brodnicki-policjant-w-czasie-wolnym-od-sluzby-reanimowal-kobietę-na-festynie.html>;
 7. <http://www.policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/122459,Policjanci-uratowali-zycie-27-latka.html>;
 8. <http://www.policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/122486,Nagrodzeni-za-uratowanie-zycia.html>;
 9. <http://www.policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/127425,Dyżurny-z-Czestochowy-pomogl-uratowac-dziecko.html>;
 10. <http://www.policja.pl/pol/aktualnosci/121107,Dyżurny-udzielił-pomocy-przez-telefon-i-uratował-zycie-niemowleciu.html?search=775546>.

WPŁYW RODZAJU PEŁNIONEJ SŁUŻBY W POLICJI NA POZIOM UMIEJĘTNOŚCI RATOWANIA ŻYCIA LUDZKIEGO

Z danych prezentowanych przez Europejską Radę Resuscytacji wynika, że nagłe zatrzymanie krążenia jest główną przyczyną zgonów w Europie. Rocznie blisko 700 000 osób umiera z powodu nagłego zatrzymania krążenia. Pomimo, iż dość spory odsetek osób, które doznały zatrzymania krążenia, nie przeżywa, ostatecznie badania dostarczają dowodów na stałą poprawę odległych wyników leczenia osób po wystąpieniu nagłego zatrzymania krążenia. Funkcjonariusze policji dość często są świadkami zdarzenia, w których zagrożone jest życie ludzkie, w wyniku różnego rodzaju stanów nagłych. Autor artykułu prezentuje wyniki badań przeprowadzonych wśród funkcjonariuszy policji w 2016 roku. Celem przeprowadzonych badań była próba uzyskania odpowiedzi na pytanie, czy rodzaj pełnionej służby w policji ma wpływ na prezentowany poziom umiejętności ratowania życia ludzkiego w sytuacji wystąpienia nagłego zatrzymania krążenia. Badaniom poddano grupę n=160 policjantów z wszystkich czterech rodzajów służby w policji. Uzyskane wyniki badań poddano dyskusji z wynikami podobnych badań przeprowadzonych wśród funkcjonariuszy policji w latach 2010-2015.

Authors:

Adam Płaczek, PhD - Police Academy in Szczytno, Institute of Security and Public Order – lecturer, E-mail: a.placzek@wspol.edu.pl. Phone: +48 89 621 5918.