

Exploration of Abuse of Position for Sexual Gain by UK Police

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Abstract : Abuse of position for sexual gain by police is defined as behavior involving individuals taking advantage of their role to pursue a sexual or improper relationship. Previous research has considered whether it involves 'bad apples' - individuals with poor moral ethos or 'bad barrels' - broader organizational flaws which may unconsciously allow, minimize, or do not effectively deal with such behavior. Low level sexual misconduct (e.g., consensual sex on duty) is more common than more serious offences (e.g., rape), yet the impact of such behavior can have severe implications not only for those involved but can also negatively undermine public confidence in the police. This ongoing, collaborative research project has identified variables from 514 historic case files from 35 UK police forces in order to identify potential risk indicators which may lead to such behavior. Quantitative analysis using logistic regression and the Cox proportion hazard model has resulted in the identification of specific risk factors of significance in prediction. Factors relating to both perpetrator background such as a history of intimate partner violence, debt, and substance misuse coupled with in work behavior such as misusing police systems increase the risk. Findings are able to provide pragmatic recommendations for those tasked with identifying potential or investigating suspected perpetrators of misconduct.

Keywords : abuse of position, forensic psychology, misconduct, sexual abuse

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