

BACKGROUND

- The occupational demands of public safety communicators has led to conditions such as high levels of stress, anxiety and PTSD¹⁻⁴.
- Increased symptoms of these conditions may require increased access to mental health professionals and decreased job performance⁵.
- The impact of Covid-19 and the adaptations put in place has changed the occupational demands of public communication work⁶⁻⁷.
- This impact on public safety communicators' mental health has yet to be studied.

RESEARCH METHODS

Anonymous online survey with open-ended questions regarding work & home life and validated self-report measures:

- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Major depressive disorder (MDD)
- Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)
- Social anxiety disorder (SAD)
- Approach & Avoidant Coping (Brief COPE)

Analysis:

- Quantitative: Logistic regressions and then compared to baseline data pre-Covid-19⁸
- Qualitative: Thematic content analysis

RESULTS CONTINUED

- The percentage of positive screens for each mental health condition increased from pre-COVID-19 to during, other than PTSD.
- COVID-19 increased participants' avoidance and their concerns for both their own and their families' health.

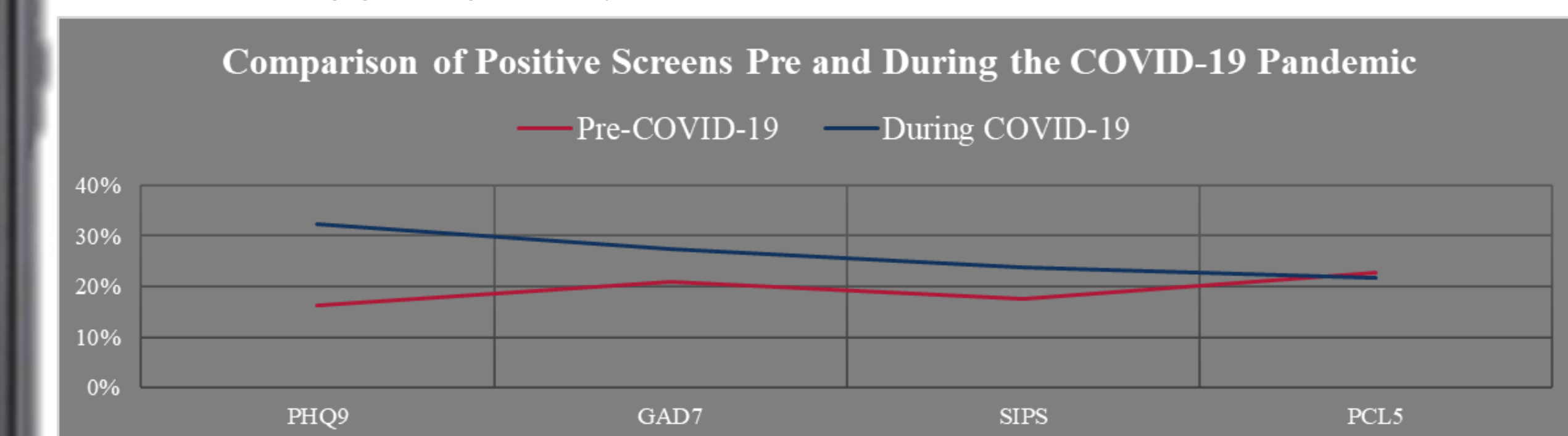


Figure 1: Comparison of Positive Screens Pre and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

PURPOSE

To identify the occupational, personal, and psychological impacts that COVID-19 has had on public safety communicators.

RECRUITMENT

All public safety communicators in British Columbia, Canada were invited to participate via a general e-mail sent by their organizations from January to February 2021.

RESULTS

Table 1: Participant Demographics

	N	Mean	STD
Sex	48	22.92% Male	
Age	48	25.1	9.38
Work years	48	11.69	7.54

"I mostly just worry about potentially being asymptomatic and bringing COVID into the workplace or being exposed to people who may be asymptomatic or not honest about their symptom screening."

Table 2: Positive Screens for Various Conditions

	N	Positive (%)
DxCovid	48	0.00%
Isolation (COPE)	48	52.08%
Anxiety (GAD7)	40	27.50%
Social Phobia (SIPS)	38	23.68%
PTSD (PCL5)	37	21.62%
Depression (PHQ9)	37	32.43%

"Although I am still working, I feel significant financial pressure related to Covid, mainly through needing to purchase extra PPE/cleaning products."

IMPLICATIONS & NEXT STEPS

- Mental Health symptoms are increasing for communicators during Covid-19.
- The small sample of participants prohibited robust statistical assessments.
- The changing occupational risk with Covid-19 demands further research of its impact on public safety communicators' mental health.

REFERENCES



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