



Mental Illness Stigma Reported By Police-to-police In Police Officers Of Tamil Nadu, India

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Introduction

- Stigma is understood as the relationship between characteristics of a person and socially constructed negative stereotypes (Goffman, 1963 and Jones et al 1984). It includes negative attitudes, and leads to unfair treatment and unfavorable outcomes. Internally stigmatizing police cultures have been found in studies where police colleagues display stigmatizing behaviors towards the police officer with psychiatric disorders.
- Officers also fear that having a mental illness maybe made as a part of their permanent record which will lead to distrust from superiors and resentment from fellow officers. Because of these attitudes within their working community, officers often do not go for psychiatric consultation or take time-offs fearing that their careers may be at stake (Carlan, Nored 2008).

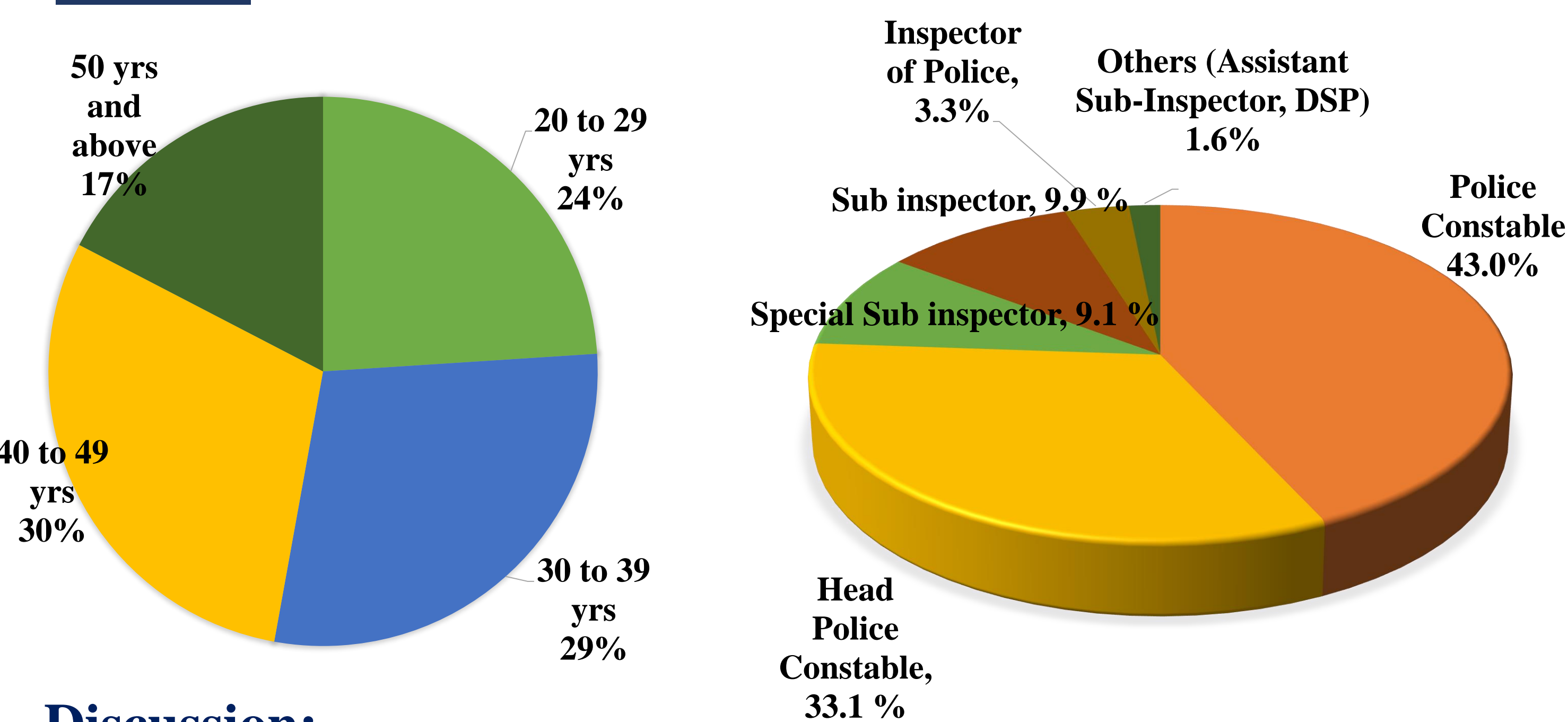
Objectives:

- To find the prevalence and nature of various aspects of mental health stigma expressed by police-to-police in police personnel belonging to Tamil Nadu state of India.

Methodology:

- Cross-sectional observational study.**
- 11 item **Police Officer Stigma Scale (POSS)** was used (Heather Stuart, 2017). The scale was translated to local language (Tamil), face validated and piloted with 20 police officers. The translated and face-validated scale was administered to police officers of various cadres. The study had been approved by Institute Ethics Committee. Data was analysed using **SPSS-23**.

Results:



Discussion:

- The most endorsed items are – **discrimination** on disclosure about mental illness, would not **disclose** to supervisor / manager about their mental illness, would not want a supervisor / manager with mental illness, would not disclose to a colleague about their mental illness.
- This is **in line with findings from another study** done in Canadian police (Heather Stuart, 2017)
- By asking respondents what they think “most people” believe, it was possible to tap deep, culturally held attitudes.

Conclusion: Mental illness stigma is highly prevalent among police personnel of Tamil Nadu, India. It needs to be tackled with culturally acceptable anti-stigma interventions. **Conflict of interest:** Nil.

S. No	Police Officer Stigma Scale - Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
1.	Most police officers would not disclose to a supervisor/manager if they were experiencing a mental illness.	38 (31.4%)	46 (38.0%)	19 (15.7%)	7 (5.8%)	2 (1.7%)	9 (7.4%)
2.	Most police officers would not disclose to a colleague if they were experiencing a mental illness.	32 (26.4%)	36 (29.8%)	29 (24.0%)	7 (5.8%)	4 (3.3%)	13 (10.7%)
3.	Most police officers would expect to be discriminated against at work if they disclosed that they were experiencing a mental illness.	49 (40.5%)	38 (31.4%)	15 (12.4%)	7 (5.8%)	2 (1.7%)	10 (8.3%)
4.	Most police officers would not want a supervisor/manager who had a mental illness.	43 (35.5%)	35 (28.9%)	19 (15.7%)	5 (4.1%)	3 (2.5%)	16 (13.2%)
5.	Most police officers think that being treated for a mental illness is a sign of personal failure.	17 (14.0%)	42 (34.7%)	27 (22.3%)	9 (7.4%)	8 (6.6%)	18 (14.9%)
6.	Most police supervisors/managers would not consider an application for promotion from an officer who has had a mental illness.	11 (9.1%)	21 (17.4%)	30 (24.8%)	16 (13.2%)	12 (9.9%)	31 (25.6%)
7.	Most police officers would not seek professional help if they were experiencing a mental illness.	16 (13.2%)	33 (27.3%)	26 (21.5%)	21 (17.4%)	9 (7.4%)	16 (13.2%)
8.	Most officers would not willingly accept a colleague with a mental illness as a partner.	25 (20.7%)	35 (28.9%)	20 (16.5%)	23 (19.0%)	9 (7.4%)	9 (7.4%)
9.	Most police officers would think less of a colleague who has had a mental illness.	23 (19.0%)	37 (30.6%)	26 (21.5%)	16 (13.2%)	11 (9.1%)	8 (6.6%)
10.	Once they know a colleague has had a mental illness, most police officers would take their opinions less seriously.	24 (19.8%)	31 (25.6%)	20 (16.5%)	18 (14.9%)	13 (10.7%)	15 (12.4%)
11.	Most police officers believe that a colleague who has had a mental illness is not trustworthy.	23 (19.0%)	39 (32.2%)	18 (14.9%)	15 (12.4%)	9 (7.4%)	17 (14.0%)

