

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

FOOT PATROL, AGAIN:
A PHYSICAL FITNESS PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION

Good for the Department, good for the officers, and good for the community. Very seldom does an administrator have the opportunity to accomplish all three of these goals with the implementation of a single program. The purpose of this paper is to explain in detail a physical fitness program that poses the potential to accomplish all three of these objectives. Making this program even more enticing is the fact it is not in conflict with The Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.).

It has been said that a police administrator's view of a fitness program may be analogized to a county resident's view of a proposed garbage dump: each recognizes the necessity of having one, but would be much happier if it were in "someone else's backyard". Part of the administrator's views can probably be attributed to uncertain legal ramifications, differing court opinions, not to mention recent passage of the A.D.A. and Civil Rights Act of 1991. Administrators want to do what is right but must be assured it is also legal.

There has been much written concerning police fitness programs in recent years, with the majority of writers focusing primarily on the standards which must be met, i.e.:

a minimum number of sit-ups in a minute, a maximum time to complete a mile and a half run, and so forth. In contrast, this paper will focus on the means, rather than the end and will state the potential benefits to be gained by the officers, the agency, and the citizens. So that there are no unrealistic expectations of what this paper intends to do, it should be noted that this program is not a perfect fitness program, but rather one that is workable.

FITNESS PROGRAM vs. FITNESS TESTING

Prior to discussing the proposed program, it is necessary to briefly examine current and past fitness practices, as applied to policing. Few agencies have a true fitness program of any kind while many more simply have fitness testing. Much confusion exists between the concepts of fitness programing and fitness testing, as evidenced by the large number of officers who indicate their agencies have a physical fitness program when in reality, they only have one of a testing nature. The fundamental difference between these two concepts is the fact that the term "program" implies a well thought out holistic program where officers not only receive information on nutrition, exercise, and stress reduction, but are also

given an opportunity to engage in such activities on department time and are tested periodically on their progress. Testing, on the other hand, usually mandates periodic physical testing alone.

MANDATORY FITNESS vs. VOLUNTARY WELLNESS

Currently, two common fitness programs exist in American law enforcement agencies; mandatory and voluntary wellness. Standards are set in the mandatory programs, usually taking age and sex as factors, and the officers are required to meet the standards or face disciplinary action. This is the type program in existence at the Bryan Police Department from the early 1980's through 1993. Although better than nothing, this program consisted solely of bi-annual testing of officers and left much to be desired. It was not uncommon for officers to refrain from working out for five months and then work just hard enough to pass the minimum standards.

Voluntary wellness now appears to be the most common fitness program in law enforcement.¹ With this type program, agencies provide health information to officers, frequently provide on-duty time to exercise, and test their progress periodically, but with no sanctions for failing to meet

standards. While wellness programs are less likely to experience legal challenges ² they are also less likely to gain participation of those officers who need it the most.

Since both the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 1991 Civil Rights Act went into effect, many law enforcement agencies, including the Bryan, Texas Police Department, have discontinued their fitness programs and/or testing. These acts made it illegal for an agency to use entrance examinations with differential test standards based upon the applicant's age or sex. Some fitness consultants believe this type testing can still be conducted, however, due to the fact that few, if any, lawsuits have resolved this issue. Since the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission began enforcing employment provisions of the ADA in 1992, there have been approximately 50,000 ADA related complaints filed. The workload of the E.E.O.C. subsequently increased by 25%, with a current backlog of almost 25,000 additional complaints. ³ In the mean time, many police departments have viewed the legislation conservatively and opted for job related testing or ceased physical testing altogether.⁴ When this "conservative" view is applied to fitness programs, it is understandable why many law enforcement agencies simply ceased

their testing programs. Most administrators could not logically justify a program that required a 15 year female veteran of the force to meet the same physical standards as a two year male officer.

BRYAN POLICE FOOT PATROL PROGRAM

A Fitness Program that is not only in compliance with the A.D.A., but is also unconventional in the sense that it has the goal of combining foot patrol with exercise, was implemented at the Bryan, Texas Police Department. At the time, Bryan Police Department consisted of 80 sworn officers and the foot patrol experiment was conducted by one patrol team (1/3 the patrol force) which consisted of one patrol lieutenant, two patrol sergeants, and twelve patrol officers. Because the Department was several officers short of being fully staffed at the time, manpower was a persistent consideration throughout the duration of the experiment. Being able to exercise while on duty during this time period was never a feasible option.

Each officer involved in the experiment, hereafter referred to as the "Program", volunteered to participate. The group included five officers who had not willingly engaged

in any running for several years. One officer had spent over 10 months on light duty as the result of a leg injury, and two others were heavy cigarette users. One of these included a 52 year old male officer.

One officer volunteered to be the patrol team's "Fitness Coordinator " and scheduled all officers to run or walk at least twice per week. While on the 6am-2pm shift, two officers attended the 6am briefing dressed ready to participate. Following the briefing the officers either ran or walked through assigned areas of the city. Prior to participation in the experiment the officers were given a list of guidelines and expectations. (A more detailed explanation of the officers' attire will be discussed later in this paper. However, it is important to note at this point that each was sufficiently equipped to answer calls, make arrests, and defend themselves.)

A goal was set for each officer to obtain a minimum of twenty minutes of aerobic exercise for each day of participation. The officers had their choice of running/walking in the downtown business district near the police department headquarters or driving to an apartment complex or shopping center and patrolling it on foot.

BENEFITS TO OFFICERS

It has been previously stated that if the goal was to design an occupation that would ensure bad health, one could not do much better than the police profession.⁵ While many papers submitted by LEMIT participants have documented the various benefits of physical fitness programs, this paper will only briefly mention such benefits choosing, instead, to place greater emphasis upon stress and blood pressure reduction.

"Physical fitness has been shown to reduce the incidence of coronary heart disease; improve physiological characteristics; slow the aging process; improve emotional well being; increase longevity; decrease morbidity; improve mental productivity; reduce incidence of injuries due to overexertion; decrease worker's compensation loss; and reduces worker absenteeism. ⁶ According to Dr. Kenneth Cooper, of the world renown Aerobic Institute in Dallas, Texas, "...exercise is the best solution to lower HCL cholesterol, to permanently quit smoking, and for improving cardiovascular health." ⁷

Few would argue that the physical fitness lifestyles of many police officers leave much to be desired. In a national study of police officers, it was determined that almost 90%

perform little or no exercise and almost 60% are overweight. 8 An officer may be as much as 25 times more likely to die of a heart attack than a gunshot wound. 9 Based upon this fact it might be interesting to examine the percentage of police budgets spent on firearms training versus that which is expended on fitness programs. It is hypothesized that many agencies do not spend 25 times the firearms training budget on fitness.

A survey conducted by the Bryan, Texas Police Department in June of 1995 revealed that Bryan officers engage in physical exercise more than the national average. However, there remains room for improvement. Of the 80 officers who responded to the survey, 21 stated that they exercised one or less times per week, with 15 of them not exercising at all. The entire department averaged exercising 2.61 times per week. These results are graphically displayed in Figure one. Interestingly, the 21 officers predict that they would work out 3.86 times per week if they could do so while on-duty. The 21 officers accounted for 26.25% of the total number of officers who responded, and comprise the group that would be considered most in need of a fitness program. The officers honestly admitted that they did not work out as often as they

should and rated their current level of fitness at 2.33, on a scale of 1 through 5. These results are graphically illustrated in Figure two. As one officer stated, "I basically just need someone to force me to work out because its hard for me to motivate myself". With foot patrol, the field supervisor provides that motivativation.

A rookie Bryan Police Department officer provided a vivid illustration of the effect that physical fitness can have upon performance during two foot pursuits in which he was involved. During the first the officer was calm and his radio transmissions were discernable. During the second, he was winded and unintelligible. The first of these pursuits occured during his participation in the program; the second occured two months after the experiment had concluded.

Stress

Many factors contribute to an officer's susceptibility to illness and injury, but none play a more important role than stress. In fact, it has been noted elsewhere stress can "...disrupt marriages, pitch officers into despair and substance abuse, and eventually contribute to early death, either directly or indirectly." ¹⁰ A simple medical definition of stress is "the response to the demands placed on your body

and mind" ¹¹ while mental fitness is defined as "the ability of an organism to maintain the various internal equilibria as closely as possible to the resting state during strenuous exertion and to restore promptly after exercise any equilibriums which have been disturbed." ¹²

Among the many physiological responses of the human body to stress are a rise in blood pressure, increased coagulation of blood and a rise in serum cholesterol and blood fat. ¹³ The purpose of these changes are to prepare the body to engage effectively in some type of large muscle activity, often referred to as the fight or flight syndrome. ¹⁴ When the syndrome occurs, the adrenal glands release a large dose of epinephrine which, in turn, causes non-essential arteries to close down thus increasing blood pressure. The immediate problem for physically unconditioned officers in this circumstance is the great effort that is required by the heart to circulate blood at higher pressure. If the arteries were partially blocked prior to the sudden activity, the potential for a heart attack is greatly increased. ¹⁵ A strong conditioned heart has the ability to circulate all the blood that is needed to meet this demand with minimal change in blood pressure, ultimately resulting in less stress placed

upon the heart. ¹⁶ The problems associated with going from a state of relaxed physical inactivity to full physical exertion in moments cannot be over stated. Hard physical activity without warmup has been shown to be connected with cardiac stress. ¹⁷ Dave Johnson, Risk Prevention Specialist for the City of Bryan, believes this sudden exertion is the primary reason that so many officers sustain injuries while on the job. Mr. Johnson further states that he "is in favor of any program that will reduce the loss of available work time and increase employee wellness and productivity." ¹⁸ Since the large muscle arteries have not opened to full capacity in the first moments of a confrontation, the heart has to push blood at a higher pressure through the smaller arteries, again causing problems for the heart.

Blood Pressure

Blood pressure may be defined as the pressure of circulating blood against the walls of the arteries. If the pressure is too high, or elevated for an extended period of time, damage can occur anywhere in the arterial circuit. Blood pressure is recorded during the contraction of the heart (systolic) and during the relaxation of the heart (diastolic). Measurements are obtained with a sphygmomanometer, which is

easy to use and relatively inexpensive.

In July of 1994 the Bryan Police Department experienced first hand the costs, both emotionally and financially, that are associated with a heart attack. On April 26, 1994, at approximately 6pm, a 53 year old officer was relaxing at his home when a neighbor ran to his house and requested assistance. The officer's neighbor had suffered a heart attack and the officer ran to his aid and performed CPR. The officer was credited with keeping his neighbor alive until the ambulance arrived. However, the victim died shortly after arriving at the hospital. Shortly after the ambulance transported the neighbor, the officer suffered a heart attack himself. He was in a coma for several days and doctors told his wife he had less than a 1% chance of surviving. If he were to survive, there would almost certainly be brain damage. The officer miraculously recovered and after 10 months of rehabilitation returned to the force. Since the City of Bryan is self-insured, the total financial costs incurred by the city due to his heart attack was in excess \$150,000. It should be noted this officer had participated in the foot patrol program during 1993 until his transfer in September, 1993. He did not exercise between the date of his transfer

and the day of his heart attack. This officer, now fully recovered, exercises by walking at least 3 times per week.

The author was not enrolled in L.E.M.I.T. during 1993 and, therefore, did not anticipate the experiment being used as a research project. If the same experiment were done today, the officers' weight, blood pressure, productivity, complaints generated, use of sick leave, and injuries would be documented for comparison. Some, but not all, of the categories were analyzed and the results will be forthcoming.

High blood pressure is a major independent factor for coronary heart disease and cerebrovascular disease. It also significantly reduces life expectancy. Those people who tend to suppress anger in response to legitimate provocation and those who tend to deny arousal and tension, traits valued in police officers, are more susceptible to high blood pressure. 19

Research Conducted at the Bryan, Texas Police Department

From June, 1994 through June, 1995 the author was able to conduct some practical research concerning officers' blood pressure levels and the resulting effects of exercise upon these levels. Although this research was not directly related to the 1993 foot patrol experiment, the results certainly

apply. Many police authors include charts which list the most stressful events an officer can encounter. While most mention major events such as losing a partner or shooting a suspect, they provide little, if any, data concerning the every day stressors in officers' lives. This research was compiled by taking, voluntarily, various patrol and CID officers' blood pressure at the beginning of their shifts, prior to lunch (CID officers only), at the end of their shifts, and following exercise. The results indicate that the average blood pressure for patrol officers at the beginning of their shifts was 118/72. The average blood pressure at the end of the shift was 125/78. For the officers who recorded their blood pressure following exercise after the end of their tour of duty, the average reduction was 33 points systolic and 11 points diastolic (92/67). It should be noted that in approximately 90% of the officers, blood pressure increased during their shift. In 100% of the instances where officers exercised, their blood pressures decreased markedly.

Perhaps most surprising were those factors which caused officers' blood pressure to increase the most. Prior to this documentation it was widely believed that a physical confrontation or pursuit would have caused the greatest

increase. During this experiment, however, the two largest factors contributing to increases in blood pressure had nothing whatsoever to do with confrontations. One case involved a 27 year old female officer who's blood pressure was 119/70 at the beginning of her shift compared to 152/97 at the end. Her explanation was that she was so busy early in the shift that she was unable to eat a meal at her regular time. When she was finally able to go to a restaurant, the waitress failed to bring the officer her food until her break was almost over. An event as common as missing a meal caused this officer's blood pressure to increase factor of 33 points systolic and 27 points diastolic. How often does an officer miss their scheduled break?

The second case involved a supervisor who scheduled his patrol team with the belief the relief shift officers would report to duty at their regular time. Unknown to him, another supervisor had changed the relief shift schedule. At the end of his shift the supervisor's blood pressure was 146/78, compared to 111/72 at the beginning. A rise of 35 points systolic and 6 points diastolic because of unexpected schedule changes. How often is a patrol supervisor faced with unexpected schedule changes?

At the Bryan Police Department, CID officers generally exercise on their own time at lunch. Blood pressure readings were obtained prior to lunch and again after exercising. The mean blood pressure for these officers before lunch was 124/74. For those who recorded their pressure after working out, the mean reduction was 21 points systolic and 9 points diastolic. Like the patrol officers, the blood pressures dropped markedly for CID officers after exercising. It also revealed that plainclothes officers, who typically don't get into confrontations, also encounter stress on the job as indicated by the typical increase in blood pressure as their work day progresses.

To determine if the decrease in CID officers' blood pressure was related to exercise or simply taking a break, blood pressure readings were also taken before and after lunch when no exercise was completed. The results reveal a small decrease in blood pressure for some officers and an actual increase for some others. The marked blood pressure reductions have occurred, consistently, only following exercise.

Other Criminal Justice Research

These findings are consistent with studies of prison guards and inmates in which stress was measured using blood pressure changes during the day as an indicator of stress in a prison environment. ²⁰ These studies reveal that the following factors increased stress, and subsequently blood pressure, in prison guards: contact with prisoners; conflict with administrators and other guards; shifts worked; and movement of prisoners. Similarly, role ambiguity, uncomfortable working conditions, and excessive caseloads were shown to increase stress levels in parole officers. ²¹ Inmate studies show there is less stress for a prisoner locked in a cell than for any other type of housing and those inmates assigned to a work detail and who regularly receive family visits undergo less stress. ²² The fact that prisoners in cells have less stress than those housed in groups could best be explained by taking fear and safety into consideration. Group interaction and socialization normally would be expected to reduce stress levels, but in the case of prison inmates it was considered a significant increase in exposure to physical threats. If the same reasoning is applied to police officers, simply the increased potential for harm can be considered an

additional physical stressor. Few would disagree that the "potential" for harm is always present in police work.

Morale

An increase in fitness has also been shown to improve officer morale, attitude, and esprit de corps.²³ The primary benefactor of exercising is the officer himself. Some police writers report that officers' spouses have noted an improvement in their family relationships following implementation of a fitness program.

Along with the other benefits, officers typically experience an increase in self confidence. An excellent example of this occurred during the foot patrol experiment. A female officer who sustained a serious leg injury during 1990 was one of the officers who participated. During the early months of 1993 she chose to walk rather than run. She expressed a concern about re-injuring her leg. No pressure was applied to her and she continued to walk. By December 1993 she had worked up the courage to run. One particular morning, following her first non-stop 1 1/2 mile run, and just prior to resuming normal patrol, she requested to speak to the patrol lieutenant. Beaming with pride, she told him how she had run the first time in years without stopping and ended

the conversation by saying "Lt., I just wanted you to know I feel really good". What a pleasant surprise to have an officer, at 6:45am, tell their supervisor that they felt really good.

Another participating officer indicated that he had not run since he was in high school. Although the program ended at the end of 1993, this officer has continued to run five miles three times per week. It is also interesting to note the fact that this officer's time in the 1 1/2 mile run was 11 minutes and 40 seconds in September, 1992. In April, 1993 his time had decreased to 11 minutes and 15 seconds and by April, 1994, had again decreased to 9 minutes and 33 seconds. This officer, who is now employed by a Federal agency, made an interesting observation when asked for his comments concerning the experiment. He stated that it was nice "because it made us feel like the department cared about us as a person, not just for how many tickets or arrests we made."

Another participating officer is a heavy cigarette smoker. Although he continues to smoke, this officer actually participated more often during 1993 than some of the other non-smoking officers. In this case it was very interesting to note that the officer did not run while off-

duty but, even though a heavy smoker, ran frequently while on duty. Fitness is even more important for tobacco users due to the documented harmful effects of nicotine upon the circulatory system. Due to the eventual partial closing of many arterioles as the result of smoking, it is much more difficult to get good oxygen and nutrient levels throughout the body. ²⁴

BENEFITS TO DEPARTMENT

Use Of Sick Leave

Although studies have shown fitness to reduce the use of sick leave, it was the author's intent to determine the effect of the 1993 program, if any, on the use of sick leave. In making this determination, sick leave records for the participating officers for 1992, 1993, and 1994 were compared with the records of the other sworn officers for the same three years. The results clearly show the program officers used 26.8 hours less sick leave during 1993 than the other sworn officers. These results are graphically depicted in Figure three.

Since the difference in the use of sick leave during 1992 and 1994 was slight, it can be reasonably stated the program

played a role in reducing the use of sick leave. The program officers actually used more sick leave than other officers during both 1992 and 1994. If each officer on sick leave had to be replaced by an officer on overtime at an average rate of \$21.00 per hour, the department realized an approximate savings of \$8442.00.

One explanation for the apparently improved health of the officers exercising is the fact that stress can bring about immunosuppression, which lowers immunity to both viruses and carcinogenic substances. Also, the abnormal amounts of adrenalin secreted during stress is thought to reduce immunity and increase susceptibility to malignancy. ²⁵

According to a study published by Blue Cross, five out of six workers at all levels of employment indicated stress as a major factor in their occupations resulting in "dissatisfaction, low self esteem, angina, persistent coughs, neurotic behavior and a host of stress related conditions. ²⁶

The majority of health impairments resulting from stress are not dramatic instances such as heart attack. The most common, in order of decreasing frequency are: anxiety and/or neurosis (25%); depression (20%); psychosomatic disorders (headache, low back pain, hypertension, gastrointestinal

tract) 15%; alcohol and drug abuse (15%); situational adjustments (divorce, finances) 10%; and other disorders, including severe mental and or physical morbidity or mortality (15%).²⁷

Job satisfaction has been shown to be a significant predictor of both health and longevity. Good health is good business. Health promotion programs in the work place have been shown to improve both the health and productivity of individuals and organizations.²⁸

In 1977 the Kimberly-Clark Corporation of Neenah, Wisconsin, created a \$2.5 million exercise/health facility with a staff of 35 for all their 2400 employees. The company predicted the investment would pay for itself in 9.5 years through increased productivity and decreased health costs. The company expected a significant savings after the 9.5 years.

Although no studies to determine the cost effectiveness of their investment have been conducted, Kimberly-Clark's health management program has expanded since 1977 to currently include; 1) health screening and graded exercise testing, 2) health risk management and exercise programs, 3) occupational health nursing services, and 4) employee

assistance program. The objectives are to; 1) achieve a higher level of wellness and productivity, 2) reduce absenteeism, and 3) to help control escalating health care costs. Kimberly-Clark remains committed to their health program and believes all objectives continue to be met.²⁹

Liability

There also exists a legal liability to departments who retain officers that are physically unfit. If an officer is injured or killed and it can be shown that another officer should have been able to assist them but could not due to lack of physical conditioning, the department is certainly open to a lawsuit. In the case of *Parker v. District of Columbia*, 850 F. 2d 708, 109 S. Ct. 1339, a jury awarded Parker \$500,000 after an officer shot him while effecting his arrest. The jury reasoned that if the officer had been in adequate physical condition, he would have over powered Parker and no shots would have been fired. The officer was thought simply to not be in adequate enough shape to do his job properly.

Work-Related Injuries

A review of all strain and sprain related injuries to Bryan patrol officers during 1993 reveals that the program

officers accounted for 33% of the officers in patrol but only 22% of the injuries. The medical costs to the city to treat these injuries were \$300.39 for the program officers and \$1914.37 for the other patrol officers. These results are graphically depicted in Figure four.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Community Policing

"Community policing, also known as foot patrol, attacks both crime and fear of crime by immersing law enforcement officers in the community." ³⁰ Since this quote was first made, community policing has been defined in countless different ways. The one constant element through the years seems to be foot patrol. In 1988, the Colorado Springs, Colorado, Police Department initiated a foot patrol program. When interviewed in 1989, Chief Jim Munger indicated that although foot patrol was the most expensive form of police service, he believed it had a deterring effect on crime. The local merchants were pleased with the program and the involved officers expressed a great deal of satisfaction with their assignments. ³¹ Chief Munger also indicated that there was a waiting list of officers wanting to be in the program. This

is even more impressive when considering the harsh winters in Colorado Springs. To provide more flexibility, the foot patrol officers are assigned vehicles. This enables them to answer calls during peak call periods and to respond as back up as needed.

Flint Foot Patrol Experiment

In January of 1979, an experimental community-based foot patrol program was implemented in Flint, Michigan. During the 3 years of the experiment, the neighborhood foot patrol program was credited with reducing the crime rate by 8.7% and for reducing calls for service by 42%. Citizens felt safer, felt the program impacted the crime rates, improved police-community relations and overall were satisfied with the program. A survey of residents in the foot patrol areas revealed 33% of them knew the officer by name and half of the rest could provide an accurate description of the officers. The citizens felt the foot officers were more effective than motor officers in encouraging crime reporting, involving citizens in neighborhood crime prevention efforts and working with juveniles. The citizens of Flint were so impressed with the experiment a tax mileage increase was passed in August of 1982 to extend the program to all parts of the city. In June

of 1985 a 3 year tax renewal to continue the foot patrol program was passed with 68% of the votes being in favor of it.³²

Cost Effectiveness

Foot patrol has been described by many as the most expensive form of police service. However, the Flint experiment reached a different conclusion. It was determined foot patrol officers engaged in more activities during their "free time" than motor officers. In terms of cost effectiveness, it was found that foot officers engaged in an activity every 41 minutes whereas motor officers averaged one activity every 81 minutes. The average cost per call for foot officer was \$16.23 while the average cost for motor officers was \$33.58; 105% more.³³ This analysis goes hand in hand with the belief that foot patrol officers are involved with the public on a much more proactive basis than are motor patrol officers.

Newark Foot Patrol Experiment

A foot patrol experiment conducted in Newark, New Jersey during the 1980's mirrored many of the findings of the Flint experiment. During the experiment in Newark, crime did not go down but foot patrol made citizens feel more secure about

their neighborhoods and shopping areas. The residents were aware of the levels of foot patrol, but only moderately aware of the levels of motor patrol. Residents in foot patrol beats perceived the severity of crime problems to decrease, with the largest decrease occurring in perceptions about street disorders, crimes against the elderly, and auto theft.³⁴ Each of these problems are confronted routinely by foot officers.

Generally speaking, Newark residents' fear of crime went down and feelings of personal safety went up in the foot patrol beats. Additionally, the positive attitudes gained from foot patrol from citizens seemed to generalize to other patrol services. Undesirable pedestrian traffic dropped in the foot patrol areas and increased in the areas foot patrol was withdrawn from. Citizen cooperation increased in the foot patrol areas. The foot patrol officers, when compared with motor officers, were more likely to believe citizens were supportive of police, saw foot patrol as a more important function in policing, emphasized community service delivery more, and indicated much greater satisfaction with their jobs.³⁵

Use of sick leave for foot officers in Newark averaged 2 days less per year than the motor officers, and 21.4% of the

foot officers used no sick leave compared to 7.8% of the motor officers. ³⁶

At the conclusion of the experiment, the following recommendations were made:

1. Provide specific training for foot officers reflecting its functions.
2. Require foot officers to respond to calls for service.
3. Emphasize closer integration of officers into neighborhood activities.

Citizen Response To Bryan Police Program

During the foot patrol experiment conducted at the Bryan Police Department, the night shift (10p-6a) officers normally participated between 4am-6am. The majority of time was spent in the Downtown district, an area approximately 25 square blocks, when few business owners were in their businesses.

While taking a burglary report during March 1994, one business owner asked the responding officer what happened to stop the officers from running in the early morning hours and what could be done to have the program reinstated. It was learned by the officer that the business owner was often in her shop before sunrise and even though she was never sighted by an officer, she frequently saw the officers and remarked about how much safer it made her feel.

Similar comments came from a resident who left his home

at 5:00am to be confronted by foot officers as he entered his vehicle parked on the street. The officers heard a door close but did not see any light or movement. Knowing they were in a high crime area, the officers paused and contacted the resident as he emerged from the shadows near his house. Although surprised by the officers, he was grateful he was contacted by the police and expressed great satisfaction in knowing officers were not all in patrol cars.

One officer walked an apartment complex at 1:00 am and did not notice anything out of place. A second officer spent 30 minutes walking the same complex at 5:30 am and found a broken window. Fearing a burglary had just occurred, or was occurring, the resident was contacted. He was unaware of the freshly broken window and was both impressed and grateful the police had discovered it.

While limited in number, the nature of public comments received by foot patrol officers during 1993 indicate that the citizens in Bryan had similar reactions to those experienced in both Flint and Newark.

Citizens' Opinions

In the Spring of 1995, the Bryan Police Department mailed a citizen attitude and opinion survey to over 700 city

residents. The survey included the following two questions: 1) What level of physical fitness do you feel a police officer should be in?, and 2) What level of physical fitness do you think Bryan officers maintain in general? Ninety nine percent of the respondents believe officers should be in good to excellent condition, while only 81.4% rate Bryan Officers physical condition as good to excellent. Obviously, the physical condition of a community's officers is both important to and noticed by the citizens they serve. One respondent, a civil engineer, wrote "I believe police officers should have mandatory exercise with pay".

EVALUATION AND RESULTS

Tangible Results

The program instituted at the Bryan Police Department had many successes, including improved officer morale and self confidence, favorable citizen response, reduced use of sick leave, reduction in stress (blood pressure), and reduced injuries.

The program directly addresses two common problems associated with a fitness program: time and motivation. Time is frequently the number one reason many Americans cite for

discontinuing a fitness program. The second is motivation. This program provides both.

Intangible Results

Many other benefits are not tangible but nonetheless should be considered when evaluating a fitness program. The fact that no burglaries occurred in the areas where foot patrol was in effect during the nights cannot, of course, be attributed solely to foot patrol. What effect did foot patrol have? Did any of the numerous suspicious persons contacted by foot officers intend to commit a crime? What effect did using an nontraditional method of patrol have on local burglars and thieves? During the experiment, officers were frequently visible in areas where a large concentration of activities took place. The officers took pride in letting potential law breakers know that if they ran on foot, the police would chase them. Seeing officers not in the "out of shape cop in the donut shop" mode let many of them know there was a high probability that the officer could catch them if they did decide to flee on foot. As one tavern owner stated "looks like ya'll getting smarter- you got to be out there with them if you want to catch them". No one can say with certainty that the program reduced the number of foot pursuits.

Cost

Perhaps the question on any administrator's mind is the cost of such a program and whether or not it was cost effective. At the Bryan Police Department, the City has paid the cost (\$175.00) of a yearly health screening/assessment for officers at Texas A & M University. The only actual costs associated with the foot patrol experiment incurred by the department was the cost of making uniform shorts out of uniform trousers damaged beyond repair; approximately \$2.00 per officer. When comparing this cost with the average 3 days less sick leave used and the costs associated with on-duty sprain/strain injuries, it becomes apparent that the program should be considered as cost effective.

IMPLEMENTATION**Goals Of Bryan Police Department Program**

For an agency to have a successful program of any kind requires visible support from the chief of police and the department's command staff. The goals of the foot patrol program must be decided before implementation. The goals emphasized will dictate the methods used. When the program was initially proposed at Bryan PD, the goals were listed as:

- 1) Discover burglaries that would have been otherwise overlooked.
- 2) Curb criminal activities that take place in secluded areas.
- 3) Provide citizens of Bryan with an innovative method of fighting crime.
- 4) Reduce the number of officer injuries due to sprains, strains, and muscle pulls through increasing and emphasizing officer fitness.
- 5) Make it easier for officers to adapt to changing shifts by providing them with a proven, acceptable, and beneficial method of relieving stress.
- 6) Increase officer productivity. This is based upon the theory that a healthy officer is a more productive officer.
- 7)
 - a. Increase local business owners' perception of police presence.
 - b. Increase citizen and criminal respect for the police.
 - c. Dispel the "lazy slob in the donut shop" image that so many people have of the police.
- 8) Generate positive media coverage of the program.
- 9) Encourage officers to complete paperwork with expediency.

Deployment

The shift supervisors should have the flexibility to deploy foot officers as needs arise. For example, they can patrol residential neighborhoods at night for car burglars, apartment complexes for "peeping tom" offenses, business districts for burglars, and high crime areas for narcotics violations.

Guidelines

The first question asked by most officers was "What can I wear and what do I have to carry with me?" Most of the officers wore black athletic shoes, uniform shorts (made from

trousers), a navy blue t-shirt with "POLICE" written in large gold letters, and their issued web gear and required equipment. It should be emphasized that these officers were performing a patrol function and were capable of responding to calls and handling arrest situations. Like mounted or bicycle patrol officers, foot patrol called a motor officer to transport prisoners. The foot officers were involved in several arrests, including Driving While Intoxicated offenses.

The Bryan Police Department was understaffed for much of 1993 and staffing levels were a major consideration when deploying officers on foot. For purposes of consistency and to insure that officers were not deployed on foot when they were behind on calls, the following guidelines were established for the program:

- 1) Participation was strictly voluntary.
- 2) Officers were required to stretch prior to foot patrol.
- 3) Officers with pending paperwork could not participate.
- 4) No officer on the team participates if manpower is so low that an officer is required to work overtime.
- 5) No one participates if calls are pending.
- 6) To benefit the cardiovascular system, a target range of 20 to 30 minutes is suggested. Actual distance and time is at the discretion of the individual officer.
- 7) Officers will not be more than 10 minutes from their patrol unit, without supervisor's approval.
- 8) Officers who do not wish to run are encouraged to walk.
- 9) "Down" time between normal and foot patrol will be kept to a minimum and will be monitored by a supervisor. The officer will be able to respond to calls at all times.

- 10) Supervisors will not participate unless at least 2 are on duty.
- 11) Officers are required to have in their possession:
 - a. Duty weapon
 - b. Badge and identification card
 - c. Handcuffs
 - d. Portable hand-unit
 - e. Flashlight (night only)
 - f. If weapon is visible, clothing must be worn that clearly identifies the officer as a police officer.

Uniforms

There were no additional costs to implement the program other than altering the uniform shorts worn. These shorts were selected because they were the same as those worn by bicycle officers and, more importantly, they had belt loops. Bryan Police Department Officers are issued web-like duty gear, which is considerably lighter, more comfortable, and less expensive than traditional leather gear.

Officers were not required to wear uniform shirts or ballistic vests while participating. Most chose dark t-shirts with "POLICE" in large gold letters. If their weapon was concealed, there was no requirement to be readily identified as a peace officer.

Hand units were required and ear phones strongly suggested. The ear phones allowed officers to "patrol" silently. Some officers wore knit stocking caps for warmth

during cold weather and to help hold their ear phones in place.

No restriction was placed on foot wear but running shoes were suggested. Most wore the same black athletic shoes worn by bicycle patrol officers.

Scheduling

Scheduling of participating officers was conducted by a member of the patrol team who volunteered to coordinate the program. Officers' work weeks consisted of 5 eight hour days. Officers were scheduled to participate 3 days per week and usually patrolled with a partner or supervisor.

Minimum staffing requirements at the Bryan Police Department dictated at least 5 officers and one supervisor on duty at all times. With a relief shift, normal staffing was 6 to 8 officers. If a shortage existed that required the use of overtime to meet the minimum staffing level, no participation was allowed. The supervisors had the authority and responsibility to insure that proper coverage existed for the city at all times.

There were no department incentives for officers to participate in the program. Oddly enough, instead of asking for or expecting additional compensation, the officers were

thankful for the opportunity to participate. Although no fitness testing was conducted in conjunction with the program, it seems reasonable that if legal standards were set, it would give officers a goal to strive for.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Health Assessment

Despite the benefits of a fitness program, the department's first priority should lie in having officers' health evaluated. No one wants an officer injured because of participation in a fitness program. Health clinics and universities frequently offer substantial savings for a large group of patients, such as a police department. The Bryan Police Department initially tested all officers and then tested those over age 35 once per year. The health assessments have gained the support of the City's Risk Manager and all officers are now tested once per year regardless of age.

Establishing Goals

Once deemed fit to participate, the goals of the program should be made known to all officers. The officers should be involved in the planning and scheduling as much as possible

and competition between teams should be encouraged. Records of weight, blood pressure, and any fitness scores should be recorded prior to implementation. It is suggested that records of participation and achievements also be kept. It has been said that if progress cannot be measured, it cannot be rewarded. If it cannot be rewarded, then it will not happen. Rewards can range from supervisor's praise and recognition, to time off and favorable evaluations. The importance of supervisor approval and encouragement cannot be overstated. If it is not important to the sergeant, it will not be important to the patrol officer either.

Not all agencies will embrace the idea of officers running while on duty. This program is designed primarily for patrol officers working shifts and would only be feasible for agencies with at least four officers on duty at one time. It is suggested that other divisions, such as C.I.D. and Staff Services, be given the flexibility to implement similar programs, even if it involves extending lunch hours by 30 minutes for those officers who participate.

CONCLUSION

The foot patrol experiment conducted at the Bryan Police

Department was very successful. Sick leave, as well as injuries and the costs associated with them, were reduced and there was an overall improvement in team morale.

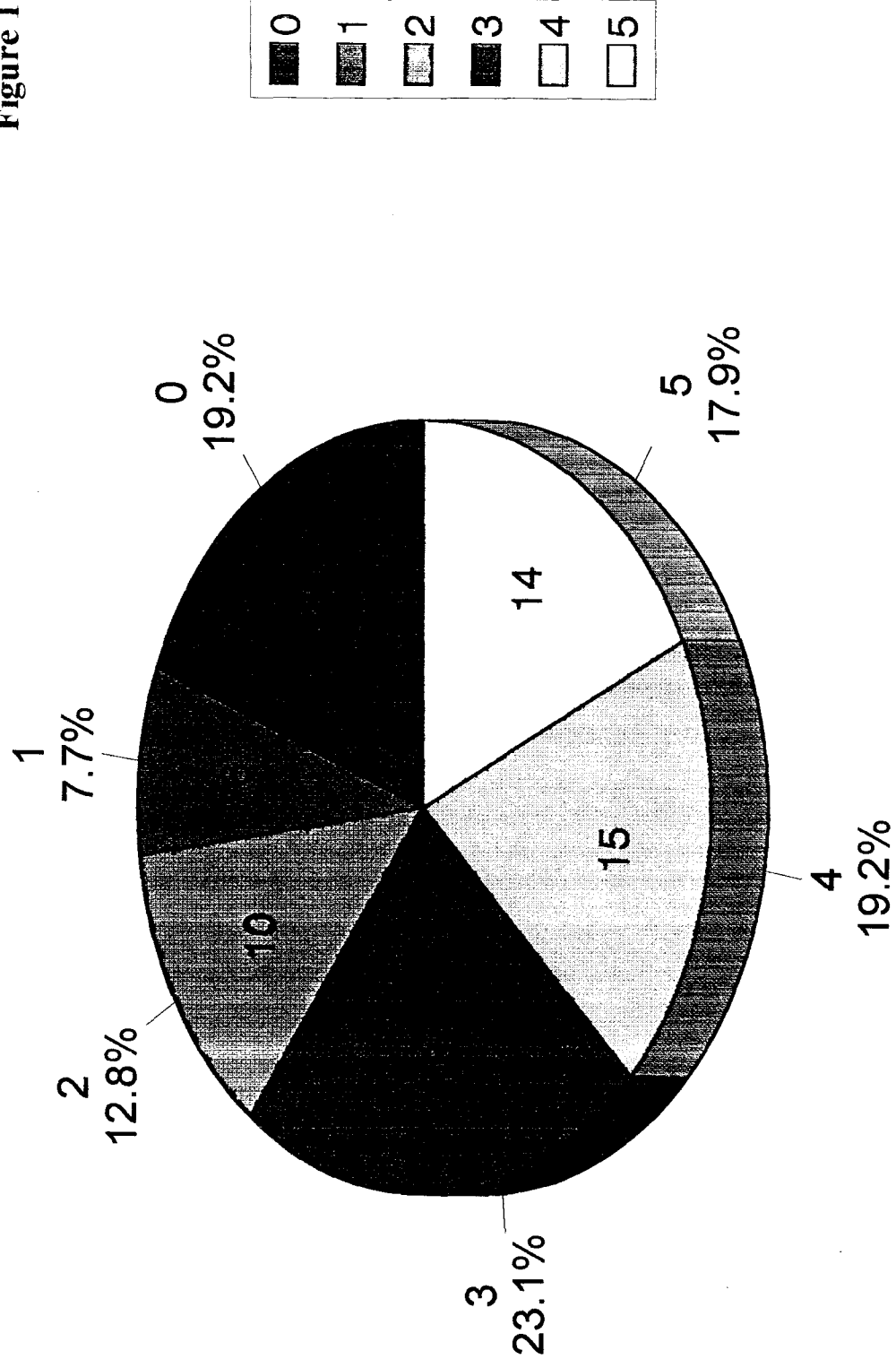
This is an unconventional fitness program that provides officers both the time and encouragement to work out. Since any officer can be required to perform a variety of patrol functions, foot patrol is not in conflict with the A.D.A. As stated earlier, the program emphasizes routine aerobic exercises rather than focusing solely upon fitness testing. It should be more important that the officer works out 3 times per week, rather than how fast he or she runs twice per year.

The term "win-win" is frequently used but not always totally accurate when describing a new program. With foot patrol as a fitness program the officers, the department, and the citizens all benefit. Perhaps the best phrase for describing the program is that of "win-win-win".

BPD OFFICERS

Workout Times Per Week

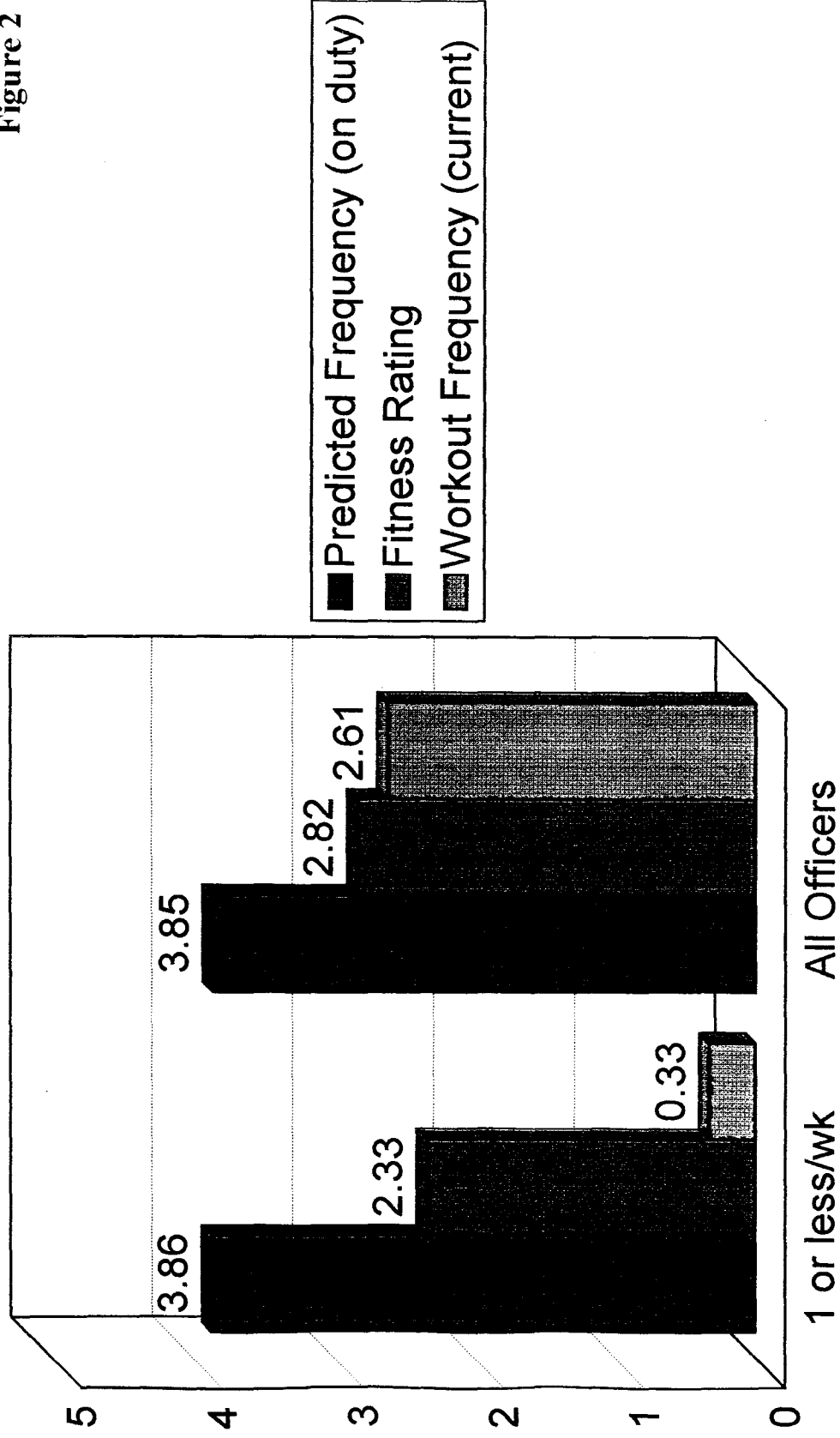
Figure 1



BPD OFFICERS

Rating/Workout Frequency

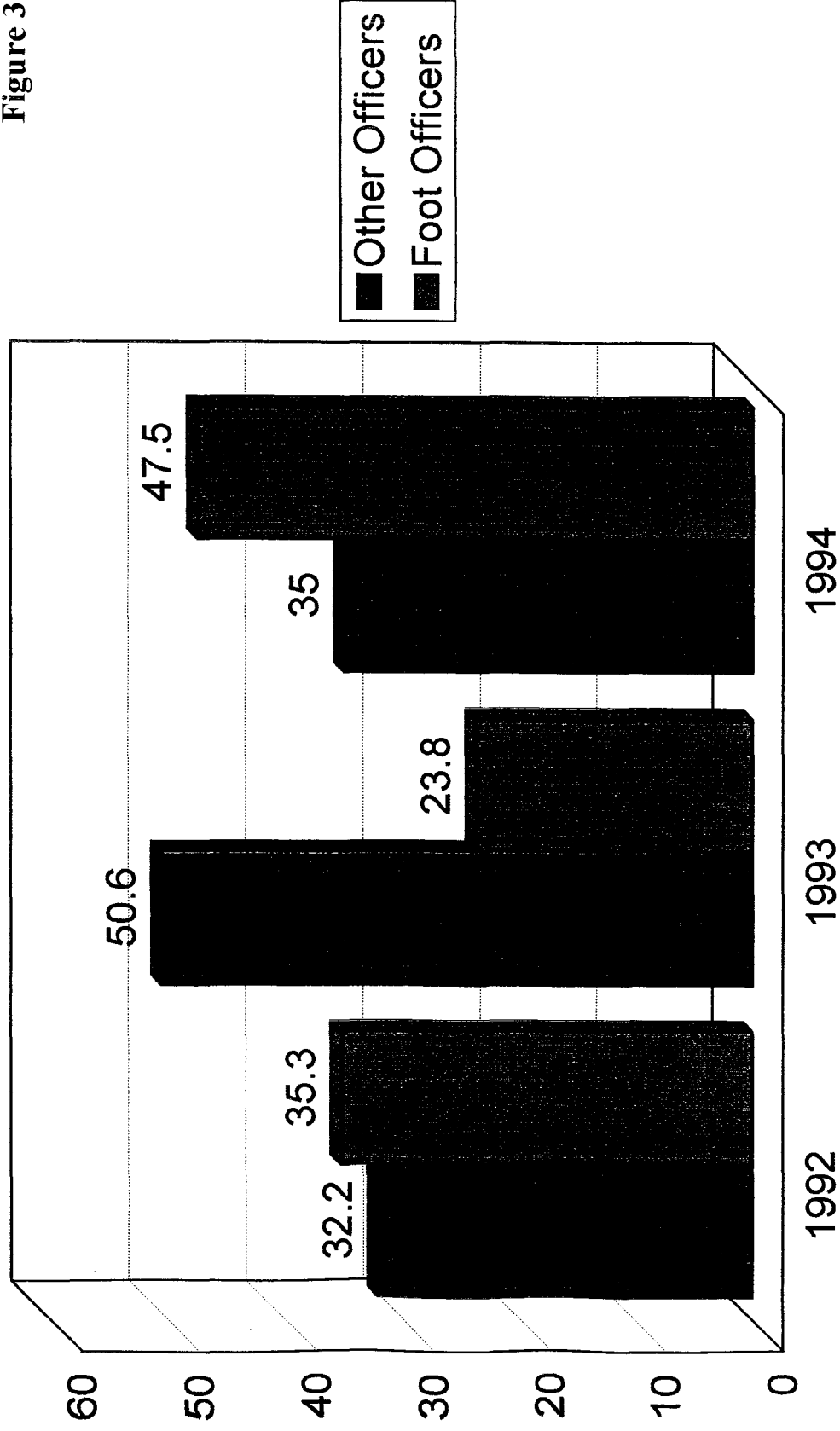
Figure 2



BPD OFFICERS

Use Of Sick Leave (in hours)

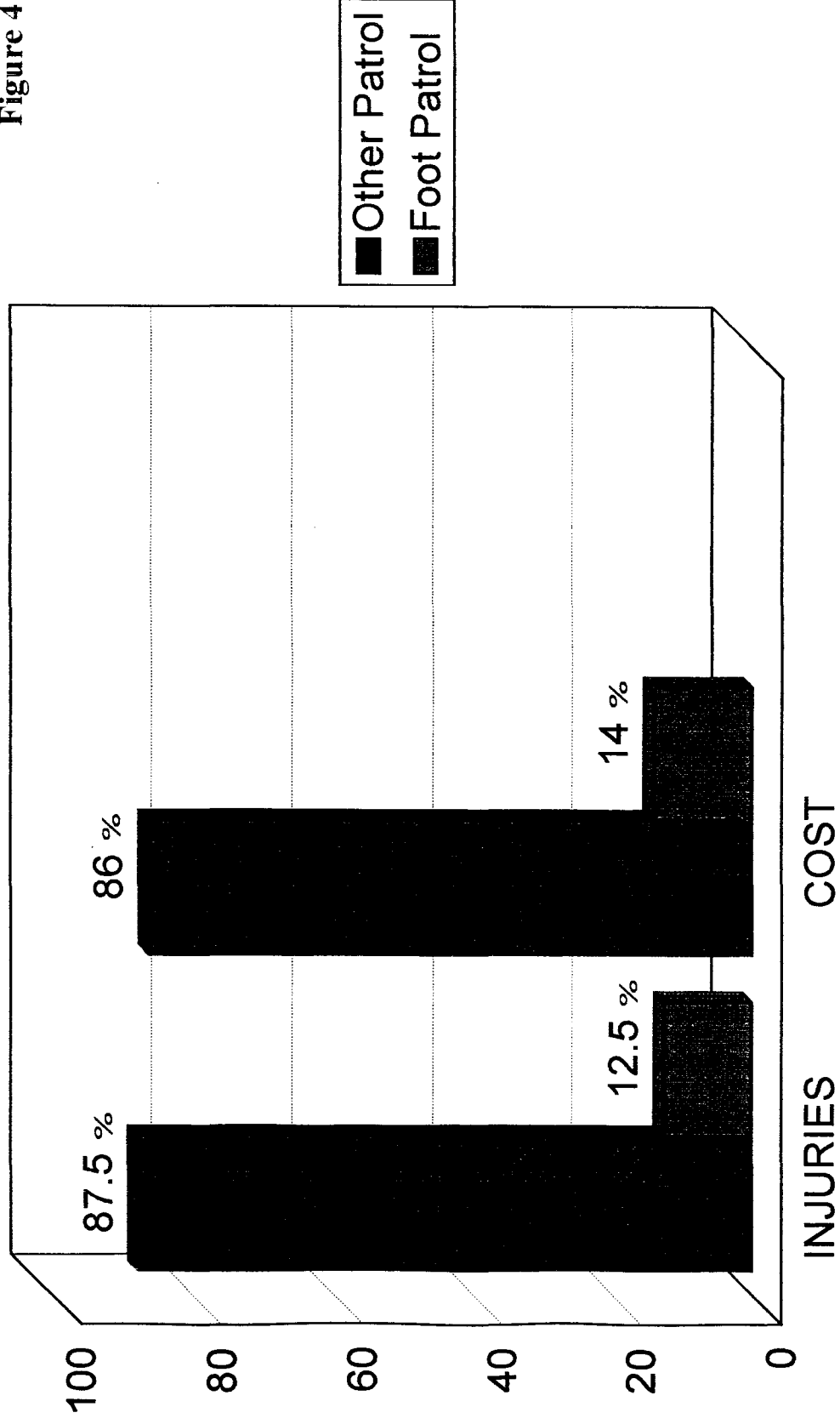
Figure 3



BRYAN PD PATROL

Officers Injured (Strains/Sprains) 1993

Figure 4



ENDNOTES

- ¹Glenn R. Jones, "Health and Fitness Programs," FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, July 1992, 10.
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- ⁴"Physical Ability Testing," Law and Order, November 1993, 72.
- ⁵John F. Reintzell, The Police Officer's Guide to Survival, Health, and Fitness (Springfield, Illinois: Charles Thomas Publishing, 1990) VII.
- ⁶Michael T. Charles, "Police Training: A Contemporary Approach," Journal of Police Science and Administration II, 3 (1983): 251.
- ⁷Dr. Kenneth Cooper, Television Interview, 10 February 1995.
- ⁸Michael Prentice and Tom Tracy, "Are Your Personnel Fit For Duty?" Law and Order, May 1992, 17.
- ⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰Robert R. Johnson, "Coping With Stress," Law and Order, February 1995, 80.
- ¹¹Ibid., 81.
- ¹²Charles, 253.
- ¹³Herbert M. Greenberg, Coping with Job Stress (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1980), 63.
- ¹⁴Ibid.
- ¹⁵Steven H. Johnson and Kathleen Kuha, "Why Should I be Physically Fit?" Law and Order, March 1993, 11.
- ¹⁶Ibid.

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18Risk Manager Dave Johnson, Interview by author, 17 August 1995, Bryan, TX.

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20Adrian Ostfeld, et al, Stress, Crowding, and Blood Pressure in Prison (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1987), 174.

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30Robert C. Trojanowicz, "Community Policing: Attacking Crime at Its Roots," The Police Chief, August 1987, 16.

31Jim Mallory, "Foot Beats," Law and Order, February 1989, 51.

32Dennis Payne and Robert Trojanowicz, Performance Profiles of Foot Officers Versus Motor Officers (East Lansing, Michigan: The National Neighborhood Patrol Center, 1985), 7.

³³Mallory, 51.

³⁴The Newark Foot Patrol Experiment (Washington: Police Foundation, 1981), 102.

³⁵Ibid., 102.

³⁶Ibid., 105.

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