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The Dirty Work Of Law Enforcement: Emotion, Secondary Traumatic Stress, And Burnout In Federal Officers Exposed To Disturbing Media

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THE DIRTY WORK OF LAW ENFORCEMENT:

EMOTION, SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS, AND BURNOUT IN FEDERAL

OFFICERS EXPOSED TO DISTURBING MEDIA

By:

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THE DIRTY WORK OF LAW ENFORCEMENT: EMOTION, SECONDARY

TRAUMATIC STRESS, AND BURNOUT IN FEDERAL OFFICERS EXPOSED TO

DISTURBING MEDIA

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The present study adds to past research on exposure to disturbing media as a driver of burnout and secondary traumatic stress. Research has shown that exposure to this type of media can lead to secondary traumatic stress (STS), burnout, as well as other negative outcomes (Burns, Bradshaw, Morley, & Domene, 2008; Divine, 2010; Krause, 2009; Perez, Jones, Englert, & Sachau, 2010; Stevenson, 2007). In addition, I discuss this type of work as a form of "dirty work" (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). I examined the role of various emotional responses and stigma as mediators and moderators of the relationship between exposure and STS and burnout. It was found that neither the number or cases nor length of time working with disturbing media cases (child pornography and sexual violence) were related to STS, burnout, or emotions, contrary to the findings of past research (Divine, 2010; Perez, et al. 2010). However, emotions were related to the negative outcomes, suggesting they play a role in the development of burnout and STS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In society, there are certain types of jobs that many people disapprove of due to their content. Examples of these can include butchers, exotic dancers, casino workers, police interrogators, and many more (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). According to Hughes (1962), people who decide to work in these jobs are often stigmatized by the rest of society and referred to as doing "dirty work." Although these jobs are very different from one another, they all have in common one thing: the question from the mainstream of society, "How are you okay with performing this type of work (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999)?" The idea of dirty work has led to a line of research on the psychological effects this work may have on the individuals who perform it. Because people wish to be seen in a positive light by the rest of society (Ashforth, 2001) being involved in such dirty work can be harmful to these individuals' psychological wellbeing.

Jobs can be classified as dirty work in our society based on three dimensions, which are physical, social, and moral taint (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). These dimensions are consistent with early research on dirty work by Hughes (1958), and are not independent of one another. This means that jobs can be tainted on one or more dimensions to be classified as "dirty."

Work that has physical taint is performed under dangerous conditions and is directly related to things that are dirty in society such as garbage and death (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Examples of jobs that fit this dimension include working as a janitor, a funeral home director, a butcher, a farmhand, and sweatshop worker. Moral taint

involves positions that seem to be sinful or guilty pleasures, and involve using methods that can be deceptive to customers. Examples include jobs like a tattoo artist, a casino dealer, a novelty store manager, or a bill collector.

The third aspect of dirty work, social taint, is of most interest in the present study. Social taint involves working regularly with stigmatized individuals, such as sex offenders, prisoners, homeless people, or underprivileged youth. Some of these jobs include police officers, social workers, psychiatrists, and public defenders (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

Research on occupations such as social work and policing has shown that the work itself can lead to stress (Patterson, 2003), as well as negative mental and physical health outcomes such as burnout, cardiovascular disease, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Bride, 2007; Brown & Campbell, 1994). Even though these occupations are "dirty work," most recognize their necessity in society (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). The role of society's stigmatization as drivers of these outcomes is unknown, but a breadth of research has examined other factors that lead to physical and mental health problems in these professions.

In the present study, I examined the negative outcomes experienced by federal law enforcement investigators who are required to examine disturbing media, including child pornography and other sexual violence. These investigators may experience negative emotions, such as guilt or shame, because they feel they are stigmatized by society because they are required to view disturbing images, videos, or audio files that show children or adults being assaulted, in order to build a case against a perpetrator who created, owned, or distributed the material (Burns, Bradshaw, Morley, & Domene, 2008).

According to Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), law enforcement is a dirty work profession that involves social taint but is of high prestige, meaning that people may look at them as great people, but personally do not want to hear about the work or be involved in it. Because of the high prestige associated with the work, however, individuals may also feel a sense of pride about the fact that they are improving society by helping arrest and prosecute dangerous people. This sense of pride in one's work could provide a buffer against some of the potential negative outcomes.

<div align="center">Reactions to Work with Disturbing Media</div>

A small number of researchers have conducted qualitative studies on investigators who work specifically on child exploitation cases. Krause (2009) states that these types of investigations are highly unique to law enforcement due to the fact that they are required to view the most "heinous images" of traumatized children in order to do their jobs. Burns et al. (2008) found that many investigators feel overwhelmed by the nature of their work. Investigators reported often feeling emotional and physical symptoms as a result of their work such as headaches, fatigue, and moodiness. Furthermore, investigators in this line of work report that they have become more paranoid and protective when it comes to children and their families (Krause, 2009; Perez, Jones, Englert, & Sachau, 2010; Stevenson, 2007). On the other hand, some investigators report becoming more withdrawn from their families because they do not want to or cannot discuss their work at home, or because they are too distressed by their work to fully participate in their families' lives (Perez et al., 2010).

Specific features of the disturbing material may determine the emotional difficulty of the work. For instance, investigators indicated that the specific format of disturbing

media exposure affects their stress responses, with live video with audio being the most difficult to bear, followed by recorded video alone, recorded audio alone, and then still images. In addition, investigators found it more difficult to deal with crimes when the victims are younger (Krause, 2009; Stevenson, 2007). Also, the sheer number of cases were overwhelming to the investigators, suggesting that the more cases one must view the more emotionally compromised he/she may become (Stevenson, 2007).

Although these investigators work to benefit society by taking offenders off the streets, they can end up being stigmatized by their family members and friends, who do not wish to hear about the details of their work (Burns et al, 2008; Perez et al, 2010). One investigator described stigmatization from a member of the public who had visited his office and had stated: *"There's this weirdo down there looking at what they do."* In addition, this investigator once heard someone call his department "sick." He felt that it was because these people did not understand his job, and perhaps it was that person's way of dealing with what they saw (Stevenson, 2007). Qualitative interviews by Krause (2009), Burns et al. (2008), Perez et al. (2010), and Stevenson (2007) have provided evidence that investigators experience negative emotions such as shame and guilt, but none of these studies qualitatively measured emotions. Because past research on this line of work has also demonstrated that these workers are more likely to become burnt out and experience secondary traumatic stress (Divine, 2010, Perez et al., 2010), I examined those variables as well.

<div align="center">Burnout</div>

When people are regularly exposed to demanding occupational pressures and situations, they can develop an internal defensive response called burnout (Jenkins &

Baird, 2002; Maslach, 1982). This response consists of three dimensions: emotional

exhaustion, a reduced sense of personal accomplishment, and a tendency to depersonalize

one's patients or clients or to become cynical (Maslach, 1982). Maslach describes

burnout as an "erosion of the human soul," (1997) meaning that it affects the values and

spirit of the person, and she believes that it is a "downward spiral" that it is not easy to

recover from. This problem has been found in "people work" such as therapy and social

work (Maslach, 1982; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996), so it is also likely that it can

occur in dirty workers, because professions that are classified to have social taint involve

a lot of "people work." Burnout is a problem because it can lead to poor delivery of

services (Jenkins & Baird, 2002), as well as decreased health, decreased coping, and

decreased job performance (Maslach, 1997). Specifically, it has been associated with

headaches, high blood pressure, fatigue, depression, anxiety, insomnia, and substance

abuse (Maslach, 1997).

Of the three burnout dimensions, emotional exhaustion is the one most obviously

associated with burnout and the most frequently studied. Emotional exhaustion means

that people feel drained, overused, and feel as though there is no way to recover. Victims

of exhaustion are chronically tired and lack energy to do anything related to work.

According to Maslach (1997), exhaustion is the first step in the process of burnout.

Depersonalization or cynicism refers to the distant attitude that people take

towards their work when they are burnt out. According to Maslach (1997) people choose

to behave this way in order to protect themselves from disappointment, especially if they

are uncertain about what the future holds. In addition, people who depersonalize may be

inclined to refer to others as objects or numbers, rather than people. They tend to stop

liking other people and refuse to help them. They put them down and treat them without courtesy (Maslach, 1982).

Reduced professional efficacy, or ineffectiveness, refers to the feeling of being overwhelmed or unable to accomplish anything. People who experience this tend to be less self-confident, which results in others also believing that they have less ability to accomplish a task (Maslach, 1997). They feel like they are failures and sometimes even switch jobs because they feel so inadequate about their abilities (Maslach, 1982). The three-factor model has been upheld in research, although antecedents of burnout have been found to relate to the factors separately (Lee & Ashforth, 1990; 1996).

Law enforcement officials experience other stressors unique to their professions, such as making violent arrests, shooting someone, responding to graphic crime scenes, or being involved in hostage situations (Gershon, Barocas, & Canton, 2009). The experience of stressful events, like these, is highly correlated with burnout (Gershon et al., 2009; Lee & Ashforth, 1996). As a result of experiencing these types of stressors, some officers report having "high emotional affect," and many reported symptoms of burnout, such as feeling "physically, emotionally, and spiritually depleted" (Gershon et al., 2009).

Perron and Hiltz (2006) conducted an investigation on the levels of burnout among a sample of child forensic interviewers. They found that the longer one worked as a forensic interviewer, the higher score that individual had on the disengagement subscale of their burnout measure. Perez et al. (2010) found that over half of computer forensics investigators working on cases involving child pornography and other disturbing media were experiencing high levels of emotional exhaustion and cynicism, and had average-to-

high scores of reduced professional efficacy, according to norms set by Maslach et al. (1996). However, Divine (2010) examined sexual crime investigators and reported slightly different findings. The mean level of emotional exhaustion of investigators was low, but one-third of investigators fell into the high emotional exhaustion category. Furthermore, levels of cynicism were moderate, and levels of professional efficacy were high (indicating low burnout). Small portions of investigators were in the high range for both cynicism and reduced professional efficacy. These findings suggest that although people in this profession show signs of burnout, perhaps certain qualities or activities may be able to reduce the levels of this, allowing the investigators to continue to be engaged in their work.

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Another negative outcome that may be experienced by socially tainted "dirty workers" such as police officers and social workers is Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS); (Cornille & Meyers, 1999; Figley, 1995; Jenkins & Baird, 2002). To date, no one has investigated STS among employees engaged in dirty work. STS occurs when those who help a victim of a trauma begin to experience post-trauma symptoms as well (Figley, 1995). It has been observed in family members of trauma victims, as well as therapists and mental health workers (Jenkins & Baird, 2002). STS involves re-experiencing the survivor's traumatic event, a numbing response to reminders of the trauma, as well as persistent arousal (Figley, 1995). According to Fischman (2008), secondary trauma is highly damaging to the helper because it may induce that person to make bad decisions and reduce the quality of their services as a helper. Sometimes, workers experiencing STS may leave their work altogether in order to avoid more negative feelings.

In addition to experiencing STS, those who help the traumatized can develop a condition called Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder (STSD). The symptoms of STSD are the same as those of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) except that victims of STSD have not experienced trauma directly. Instead, they are engaged in helping behaviors for the traumatized, or are in some way exposed to those who have experienced a trauma (Figley, 1995). Some of the symptoms for PTSD include recollections of the event, diminished interest in activities, diminished affect, difficulty sleeping, hypervigilance, and difficulty concentrating. It has been shown that those who help the traumatized experience STSD more prevalently than the general population, but less prevalently than psychiatric patients, indicating some need for intervention for these workers (Cornille & Meyers, 1999). It is important to note that other related constructs such as vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue are discussed in the literature (Figley, 1995). There remains some lack of definitional clarity regarding the differences between these constructs (Baird & Kracen, 2006; Charlton, 2009; Figley, 1995). Nevertheless, researchers agree that it is a normative occupational hazard for people in helping professions (Jenkins & Baird, 2002) and terms such as compassion fatigue may be less stigmatizing than secondary trauma. In this study, I use the term secondary trauma as that is the specific measure I used.

In their study of computer forensic investigators, Perez et al. (2010) measured STS and found that 36% of the investigators reported either moderate or high levels of STSD. The mean level of STSD for the entire sample of investigators (M=36.11) was higher than mean levels reported in studies of STSD in other occupations such as social workers (M=29.5; Bride, Robinson, Yegedis, & Figley, 2004). In his sample of federal

law enforcement agents investigating sexual crime, Divine (2010) found similar results with a slightly lower mean level of STSD (M=35.55) than reported by Perez and her colleagues.

Defining Emotion

Few researchers have examined the emotion component of dirty work, or their role in the development of STS and burnout. Emotions fall under the umbrella of affect, which is comprised of both traits and states (Carson, 2006). Affect has both trait and state components, because individuals can be predisposed to feel certain ways, for example, those experiencing shame are more likely than others to experience fear (Diener, Smith, & Fujita, 1995). However, affect also includes the state components of moods and emotions that are seen as temporary (Watson & Clark, 1984). Emotions have been hard to define by researchers because of their quickness of occurrence and change (Carson, 2006). However, people have a tendency to be able to explain why they feel certain emotions and where they came from (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), making them slightly easier to study than moods. Therefore, I studied just the *emotions* part of affect, although terms in research are often used interchangeably.

Emotions have been categorized into numerous categories over the years by many different researchers (Ekman, 1971; Izard, 1971; Lazarus & Cohen-Charash, 2001; Plutchik, 1980). Across all of these researchers, the common themes show love, joy, fear, anger, shame, sadness, happiness, surprise, pride, anxiety, and boredom as the general emotions (Carson, 2006). Emotions result from work as a function of both the person and the environment (Lazarus & Cohen-Charash, 2001). This is because a work-

related event or situation is likely to trigger an emotion, but the person's disposition to feel a certain way will also influence the experience.

Research has shown that positive affectivity, which includes feelings such as joy and pride, is negatively related to the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout, while negative affectivity, which includes feelings such as shame, sadness, and fear, is positively related to the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). This makes sense, because the emotional exhaustion dimension pertains specifically to emotion. Little research has been conducted on specific emotions and their roles in the development of burnout and STS. In a study of teachers, Carson (2006) found that those with high levels of burnout also had a higher frequency of negative emotions than those with low levels of burnout. In addition, he found that teachers in the high burnout category were also experiencing negative emotions significantly more often than they were experiencing positive emotions. Because it is currently unknown whether burnout leads to negative emotions, or negative emotions that lead to burnout, further research needs to be conducted in this area.

The Role of Emotion in Burnout and STS

Dirty work is likely to elicit a range of emotions from the worker, ranging from anxiety, embarrassment, and shame, to joy and pride (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2002). There are many aspects of work, including violence, fraud, and sabotage that have been consistently linked to the experience of negative emotion (Lord, Klimoski, & Kanfer, 2002), and emotion-based job demands have been linked to burnout (Bakker & Heuven, 2006). Positive emotions such as joy have been shown to lead to positive organizational outcomes, such as organizational commitment and prosocial behavior (Lord et al., 2002).

Fisher (2000) found that positive emotions are related to job satisfaction, while negative emotions are negatively associated with satisfaction. In terms of performance, Staw and Barsade (1993) found that those experiencing positive emotions at work performed better than those experiencing more negative emotions. For example, people who experience positive emotion on the job have shown improved cognitive function with their ability to recall more information and have shown to be better problem solvers (Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 1994). The findings of this research indicate that, consistently, positive emotions tend to lead to positive outcomes and negative emotions lead to negative outcomes.

Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) do not specifically mention emotions that are experienced by dirty workers, but do mention that dirty workers enter a process of reframing their work, in order to look at it in a more positive way. Jacobs (1981) found that prison guards take pride in their work, which suggests they may be able to maintain positive psychological wellbeing. Yet, prison guards believed that society was kinder to the inmates as opposed to themselves. Under that premise, it would make sense for prison guards to somehow feel ashamed of the work that they do in society. However, over half of those people stated that they were proud of the work that they did (Jacobs, 1981), suggesting a positive wellbeing and lack of regard for the opinions of others.

Qualitative research on investigators of disturbing media suggests that these individuals experience both positive and negative emotions as a result of their work. In a qualitative interview with police officers required to examine online child abuse media, Stevenson (2007) found that some investigators understood the impact of their work on society. One participant stated, "You know you've got a job [to do], and you know that you're going to do a good thing in relation to putting this person before a court and

hopefully behind bars and basically make the streets safe," suggesting a sense of pride about his work. Another participant stated, "I tend to think of it, if I didn't do something about this photograph it could continue, I can't put right what's happened previously, and so what I gotta do is focus on who's taken that photograph."

Participants in a study of police officers investigating Internet child exploitation stated they found a sense of personal meaning and satisfaction from their work (Burns et al., 2008). Participants in Perez et al.'s (2010) study indicated that they would like to be able to see the outcomes of their casework, to help them take pride in their contributions to society.

On the other hand, qualitative research from the same study by Perez et al. (2010) has suggested that federal officers feel negative emotions as a result of viewing disturbing media. For example, one investigator stated that his wife became upset with him whenever he had to view pornography of any kind. He said that he then learned not to talk to his family about his work. Another investigator stated, "Sometimes I have to remind myself that these are my kids, and intimacy within proper bounds is okay," suggesting a feeling of shame.

In Stevenson's (2007) study, one investigator stated, "I have to say I'm disturbed by, viewing every single image, I find it disgusting, I really do not like it in the slightest," which would be expected, although this comment suggests feelings of negativity about the work itself.

<div align="center">Present Study</div>

For the present study, I was specifically interested in looking at the negative outcomes experienced by federal law enforcement investigators who are required to

examine disturbing media, including child pornography and other forms of sexual violence. The specific negative outcomes I examined were burnout and STS, consistent with previous quantitative research on disturbing media investigators (Divine, 2010; Perez et al., 2010). Although they did not complete formal measures of burnout or STS, the symptoms described by the participants in the qualitative studies by Burns et al. (2008) and Stevenson (2007) are very similar to burnout and STS, including intrusive thoughts about the material, emotional exhaustion, and hyper vigilance. Participants felt concerned about their own well-being as well as that of their teammates, and also felt as though they could not talk about their work with others because it would be traumatizing (Burns et al., 2008).

In line with past research on the topic, the present study contributes to existing research on federal investigators' burnout and STS by examining the role emotions play in the relationship between exposure to disturbing media and burnout and STS. I compared the rates of STS and burnout of the federal investigators who have viewed disturbing media to those who have not, as well as investigated whether emotions have a mediating or moderating effect on STS and burnout for officers exposed to disturbing media.

I hypothesize that frequency of exposure is positively related to STS and burnout, similar to the findings by Perez et al. (2010) that more exposure was related to STS. In addition, I predicted group differences between investigators who have worked on disturbing media cases and those who have not, such that investigators who have worked with disturbing media experience more STS and burnout.

Hypothesis 1a: *The number of cases involving exposure to child pornography and/or sexual violence will be positively related to STS and burnout.*

Hypothesis 1b: *The length of time an investigator has been exposed to disturbing media on the job will be positively related to STS and burnout.*

Figure 1. Hypothesized relationship between exposure to disturbing media and STS and burnout.

I expect that emotions play a role in the relationship between exposure to disturbing media and burnout and STS. Because exposure to disturbing material is likely to elicit negative emotion from the investigators, I hypothesize that the process of experiencing burnout and STS happens through strong negative emotions. In line with Baron and Kenny's (1986) research on mediation, suggesting that a relationship between two variables can happen through a third variable, I hypothesize negative emotions such as shame and guilt are mediators in the relationships between disturbing media exposure and STS and burnout.

Hypothesis 2: *The STS and burnout experienced by investigators exposed to disturbing media will be mediated by negative emotions experienced after the exposure.*

Figure 2. Hypothesized mediating effect of negative emotion on the relationship between exposure to disturbing media and STS and burnout.

While some, but not all, investigators will experience negative emotions after viewing disturbing media, I hypothesize that feelings of pride and joy about their work are a buffer in the experience of STS and burnout. Some investigators may understand the benefits of their work for society, and thus be less likely to develop STS or burnout. I hypothesize that positive emotions will moderate (Baron & Kenny, 1986) the relationships between exposure to disturbing media and STS and burnout. This relationship should be such that those individuals who have positive emotions about their work will experience less burnout and STS than those individuals who do not have positive emotions about their work.

Hypothesis 3: Feelings of positive emotions will moderate the relationship between exposure to disturbing media and STS and burnout, such that those who experience more positive emotions regarding their work will have decreased STS and burnout compared to those who experience less positive emotion.
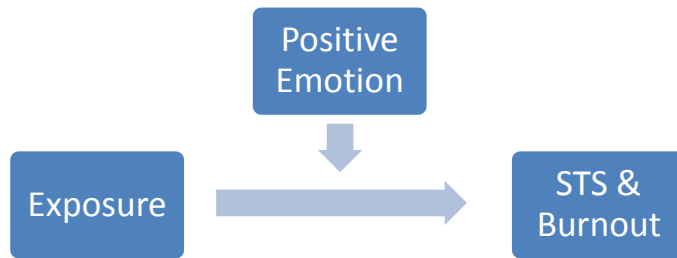
Figure 3. Proposed moderating effect of positive emotion on the relationship between exposure to disturbing media and STS and burnout.

I also hypothesize that feelings of stigmatization play a role in the development of

burnout and STS, similar to the relationship between emotions and STS and burnout.

This is based on the classification of law enforcement into the social taint and high

prestige category of dirty work (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

Hypothesis 4: *Feelings of stigmatization will mediate the relationship between exposure*

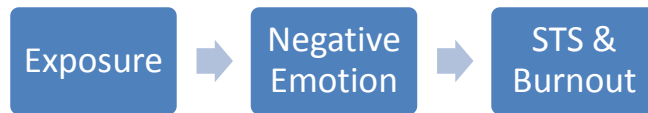*to disturbing media and STS and burnout.*
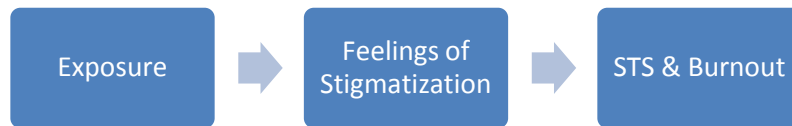
Figure 4. Hypothesized mediating effect of feelings of stigmatization on the relationship between exposure to disturbing media and STS and burnout.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

Approximately 100 special agents working at several U.S. federal law enforcement agencies were invited to participate in the study. Forty-five agents completed the study for a 46% response rate, and 87% of those who responded had exposure to disturbing media, with a mean of 10 cases. Of those exposed to disturbing media, the number of cases ranged from 1 to 200. Approximately 82% of the sample was male. Forty-six percent of the participants fell between the age range of 31 to 40. Full demographic results are presented in Table 1.

Procedure

Investigators were invited to participate in the study via email. The investigators responded to the items via online survey. They had an unlimited amount of time to complete the survey, but were asked to complete it within two weeks of receiving the email.

Measures

Demographics. Participants completed several demographic items assessing their gender, race, marital status, parental status, highest education level achieved, years in law enforcement, years with the agency, and positions held within the agency.

Exposure to Disturbing Media. To measure the extent to which investigators had been exposed to disturbing media, they answered four questions about the number of cases they had worked on containing disturbing media, what type of disturbing media they viewed, and how long it had been since they were first exposed to disturbing media.

Burnout. To assess the level of burnout of the participants, the 16-item Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (Maslach et al., 1996) was included in the survey. The MBI-GS is a reliable and widely cited measure of burnout that contains three subscales, exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .71 to .90 for each subscale. For this study, reliabilities ranged from .77 to .91. The MBI-GS instructs participants to think about how frequently they have felt certain symptoms of burnout, and answer on a scale of 0 (*never*) to 6 (*every day*). Sample items included, "I feel emotionally drained from my work," and "I have become less interested in my work since I started this job" (reverse scored).

Secondary Traumatic Stress. STS was measured using the Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale, adapted from Bride et al. (2004). The scale contains 17 items and measures three constructs: intrusion, avoidance, and arousal. This scale has a reported Cronbach's alpha of .91, and is combined into one scale for ease of interpretation, which is consistent with findings of Ting, Jacobson, Sanders, Bride, and Harrington (2005). Reliability for this study was .92. The STSS asked respondents to record how frequently they felt certain symptoms of STS in the past seven days, on a scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*). Sample items included, "I felt discouraged about the future," and "Reminders of my work upset me."

Emotion. Although measures of emotion at work exist, including the Job Emotion

Scale (Fisher, 2000), I was unable to find a measure that contained all relevant emotions

for this context. To measure some of the emotions, I included items from the Positive-

Negative Affect Scale – X (Watson & Clark, 1994), including the basic negative and

positive emotion scales, as well as the fear, hostility, guilt, sadness, joviality, self-

assurance, and attentiveness scales. The PANAS-X is a common measure of emotion

(Watson & Clark, 1994) and includes the emotions studied by Ekman (1971) Izard

(1971), Nowlis (1965), and Zuckerman and Lubin (1965).

PANAS-X instructed respondents to rate the frequency that they have felt the

emotions within the past few weeks. Participants who had been exposed to disturbing

media were instructed to think about these emotions as a result of their work with

disturbing media. Participants who had not been exposed to disturbing media were

instructed to think about these emotions as a result of their work in general. The PANAS

– X has reliabilities of .86 (positive emotion) and .87 (negative emotion). This study

yielded reliability results of .92 for positive emotion and .84 for negative emotion. The

negative emotion subscales, which include fear, hostility, sadness, and guilt had lower

reliabilities, ranging from .56 to .88. The positive emotion subscales, which included

attentiveness, joviality, and self-assurance had reliabilities ranging from .76 to .92. The

specific alphas for each construct are listed in Table 2.

In addition, I used items from previous studies regarding emotions in investigators

of disturbing media (Divine, 2010; Perez et al., 2010) to assess pride, which is not

included in the PANAS-X, but was of interest to me in this study. These items are scored

on a 1to 5 Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A sample item

included, "I am proud of the work that I do."

Stigmatization. Although some research discusses dirty work and its implications

(Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Ashforth et al., 2007), the researchers have not created a

measure to determine whether a worker feels as though he or she is a dirty worker. Based

on the classification of various jobs by Ashforth and his colleagues (2007), I included

three questions regarding stigmatization. A sample item includes, "I am concerned about

the way others perceive me because of the work that I do." These questions will provide

quantitative evidence that law enforcement officers are part of the *dirty work* paradigm.

The reliability for this scale was α= .66.

Open ended questions. I explored the feelings of investigators who stumble upon

disturbing media while looking for other types of illegal activity. It is unknown whether

this type of exposure elicits different feelings from the investigators, so they answered an

open-ended question about how unexpected exposure to disturbing media is different

from exposure that one is anticipating.

Participants also answered five optional open-ended questions allowing them to

elaborate on questions presented in the survey. The purpose of these questions was to

gain more insight on this topic, as there is so little research on the effects of disturbing

media to date. The answers to these questions may help form future research questions.

The questions are as follows, "How has your work affected your relationships with family

and friends?" "How has your work affected your relationship with your children?" "What

is the hardest thing about your work?" "What helps you the most in coping with the

negative aspects of your work?" and "What is the most beneficial thing the agency could

do to help you cope with the negative aspects of your job?"

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Descriptive Results

Descriptive statistics for all variables (means, standard deviations, and ranges) are shown in Table 2, and the correlations between the variables are presented in Table 3.

The mean secondary traumatic stress level of the participants was 25.34 ($SD=9$.46). According to Bride (2007), scores that exceed 38 are considered moderate STSD and scores exceeding 49 are considered high STSD. Therefore, the mean of this sample was in the low STSD range. This mean is also lower than other similar samples including another sample of law enforcement officers ($M=35.55$; Divine, 2010), computer forensic investigators ($M=36.11$; Perez et al., 2010), and forensic interviewers of child abuse victims ($M=34.2$; Perron & Hiltz, 2006). Of the 44 participants who completed the STSS, 5% ($N=2$) indicated high levels of STSD, while 7% ($N=3$) were in the moderate range for STSD.

With regard to burnout, the mean exhaustion level of the participants was in the moderate range ($M=2.07$, $SD=1.43$), the mean cynicism level was in the moderate range ($M=1.71$, $SD=1.15$) and the professional efficacy mean was in the moderate range ($M=4.78$, $SD=1.04$) according to the criteria laid out by Maslach et al. (1996). Of the sample, 26% ($N=11$) participants were in the high exhaustion category, 33% ($N=14$) in the high cynicism category, and 20% ($N=9$) in the low professional efficacy category (low scores on professional efficacy indicate high burnout).

The mean positive emotion score was 3.43 ($SD=.92$) and the mean negative

emotion score was 1.44 ($SD=.49$), indicating more positive emotion among the sample

than negative emotion.

Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 predicted that the number of disturbing media cases an agent

worked on would be positively related to the STS and burnout experienced by the agents.

No significant relation was found between the number of cases and burnout or STS.

Hypothesis 1b predicted the length of time since an investigator had been exposed to

disturbing media would be related to burnout and STS. The length of time since an

investigator had been exposed to disturbing media was not related to STS or burnout.

This lack of relationship was found for exposure to child pornography and STS ($r=.00$,

ns), exhaustion ($r=.18$, *ns*), cynicism ($r=-.18$, *ns*), and professional efficacy ($r=.12$, *ns*).

There was also no relationship between exposure to sexual violence and STS ($r=.21$, *ns*),

exhaustion ($r=.03$, *ns*), cynicism ($r=-.19$, *ns*), and professional efficacy ($r=-.01$, *ns*).

There was also no relationship for combined exposure to both child pornography and

sexual violence and STS ($r=.14$, *ns*), exhaustion ($r=.09$, *ns*), cynicism ($r=-.20$, *ns*), and

professional efficacy ($r=.05$, *ns*).

Hypothesis 2 predicted that negative emotions would mediate the relationship

between exposure to disturbing media and burnout and STS. According to the process

laid out by Baron and Kenny (1986), the first step in a mediation analysis is to examine

the relationship between the predictor variable and the outcome variable. Because

exposure to disturbing media was not related to burnout or STS, no further steps were

conducted in the analysis. Although hypothesis 2 could not be tested, it was found that

negative emotion was related to the exhaustion ($r= .54$, $p<.01$) and cynicism dimensions

of burnout ($r=.31$, $p<.05$), as well as STS ($r=.43$, $p<.01$).

Hypothesis 3 predicted that positive emotion would moderate the relationship

between exposure to disturbing media and STS and burnout. Positive emotion was found

to be negatively related to STS ($r=-.53$, $p<.01$). In addition, positive emotion moderated

the relationship between the total number of disturbing media cases and STS ($\beta=-.54$,

$P<.05$), such that the number of cases of disturbing media interacted with positive

emotion to act as a buffer against STS. Among individuals who reported high levels of

positive emotion, there was no relationship between number of cases and STS, but among

individuals reporting low or moderate levels of positive emotion, there was a strong

positive relationship between number of cases and STS. This partially supports

hypothesis 3. Table 4 illustrates the results of the regression. Figure 5 below displays the

interaction.
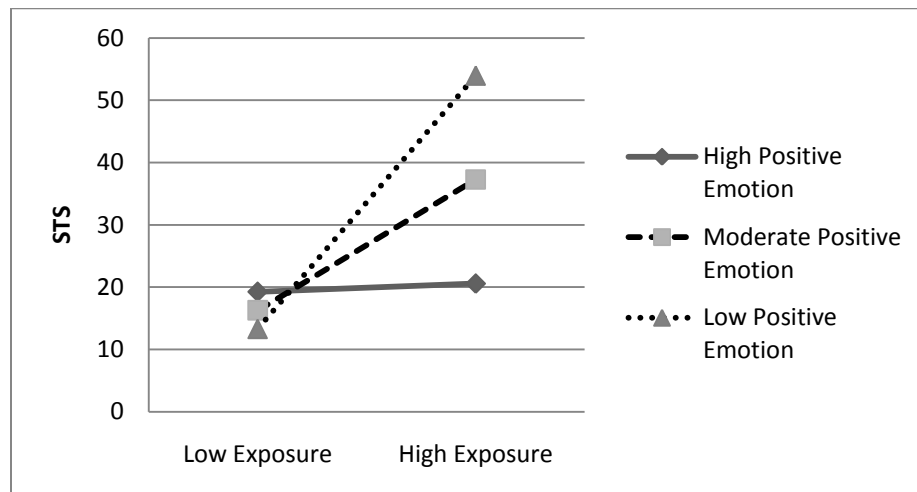
Figure 5. Interaction between total number of cases and positive emotion on STS.

Pride was found to be related to both professional efficacy ($r=.44, p<.01$) and cynicism ($r=-.52, p<.01$). A test of moderated regression revealed that pride did not moderate the relationship between total number of disturbing media cases and professional efficacy ($\beta=.29$, *ns*) or cynicism ($\beta=-.32$, *ns*). Attentiveness was also found to be related to professional efficacy ($r=.40, p<.05$), but did not moderate the relationship between total number of cases and professional efficacy ($\beta= .04$, *ns*).

Hypothesis 4 predicted that stigma would mediate the relationship between exposure to disturbing media and STS and burnout. Similar to hypothesis 2, the first step in the mediation process by Baron and Kenny (1986) would be to examine the relationship between the independent and mediator variables. No relationship was found between exposure to disturbing media and STS or burnout, so no further steps were taken in this analysis. Although hypothesis 4 could not be tested, it was found that stigma was positively related to the cynicism dimension of burnout ($r=.54, p<.01$), and STS ($r=.38, p<.05$).

Exploratory and Open Ended Results

The first research question I wanted to explore was whether exposure to disturbing media is different when the officer is unaware that he/she will be viewing disturbing media. Of the 13 officers who had viewed disturbing media unexpectedly, only two stated that they felt the experience was different. One participant said the case stayed with him longer after it was closed and was more shocking, while the other stated it was more of a mental strain when the disturbing media was unexpected because he did not have the time to prepare himself for what he would view.

Another exploratory research question was regarding the officers' relationships with their family, friends, and children and how work had affected those relationships. Some officers stated that the work did not affect their relationships, while some said it significantly affected these relationships. An investigator noted the importance of always reminding his friends and family to not put bumper stickers on their cars that indicate they have children. Another stated, "I actually prefer to not be around children. I have seen pictures of disgusting things happening to children and whenever I am around kids, those images return and it is messed up." One investigator described the toll his limited exposure to disturbing media took on his relationship with his wife: "I have specifically requested to work on other areas of the agency's mission so I would not be required to work violence or child pornography cases…We do not get as intimate as before the work, but after time has passed the intimacy slowly returns." Another states a difficulty in forming romantic relationships: "My work is time consuming and makes me distant until I can deal with what I've seen. Most women can't handle that emotional distance early in the relationship and leave. Therefore I rarely make it past the first couple of weeks or months in a relationship."

In addition, I asked officers to specifically talk about their relationships with their children as a result of their work. Some stated that the work had not changed the relationship, while many stated that they have become more protective of their children as a result. One stated that he would not allow his children to go to a babysitter until an extensive friendship had been formed with that individual, while another said he didn't like cell phones and sleepovers for his children.

Next, I asked officers what was the hardest thing about their work. The hardest things ranged from administrative overhead duties, dealing with people, balancing time for themselves, bosses, and bureaucratic red tape. The majority of respondents stated that managing their time and finding time to do work as well and having to view child pornography were the hardest parts of their jobs.

Investigators also gave some insight into what helps them in coping with their disturbing media work. Responses ranged from thinking about the positive contribution the work makes to society (imprisoning pedophiles and helping the victims), church, communicating and spending time with family, hobbies, using humor with coworkers, and working out.

Finally, I ended the exploratory questioning by asking officers what the agency could do to help them cope with the negative aspects of their jobs. Some officers stated simple acknowledgement that the job can be mentally tough, while others said to ensure the supervisors keep an eye on potential stress-related issues in employees. Another stated that they could rotate who has to work on the disturbing media cases to lessen the impact on individual agents. Another stated that having more education on the "good, bad, and ugly of law enforcement." One stated that a "therapist-type" to talk to would be more helpful than just talking to a superior about the work. However, others stated that it is something that they should just become accustomed to, "If people are truly bothered by disturbing media then they may want to look for another job. If you are going to be good at this job, you are going to be exposed to horrible things…and you need to look past it to conduct an objective investigation," or "I don't see these things as a negative. I wanted this job in order to catch those responsible."

Additional Analyses

Even though I was unable to test my hypotheses of the mediating effects of emotion, I conducted analyses on whether emotions predicted negative outcomes. As noted in Table 3, several emotion variables are correlated with the outcome measures. To investigate which of the emotions are the biggest predictors of burnout and STS, I conducted four stepwise regression analyses.

For STS, the analysis revealed sadness (β= .44, p<.01) and joviality (β= -.30, p<.05) were the strongest predictors and explained 41% of the variance in STS. A stepwise regression of cynicism on the associated variables revealed that stigma (β=.39, p<.01) and pride (β=-.38, p<.01) were the strongest drivers of cynicism and contributed 40% of the variance. For exhaustion, it was found that only general negative emotion was a significant predictor (β=.54, p<.01), and contributed 29% of the variance. Finally, for professional efficacy, sadness (β=-.33, p<.05) and pride (β=.40, p<.01) were the most significant predictors and together contributed 28% of the variance.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Sample

	N	%
Exposure to Disturbing Media		
Yes	39	86.7
No	6	13.3
Length of Time Since Exposure		
Less than 6 months ago	3	7.7
6 months to 1 year ago	6	15.4
1-2 years ago	8	20.5
2-5 years ago	8	20.5
More than 5 years ago	14	35.9
Employment Status		
Active Duty	33	73.3
Civilian Federal Officer	12	26.7
Time at Agency		
Less than 1 year	2	4.4
1-2 years	8	17.8
2-5 years	14	31.1
More than 5 years	21	46.7
Gender		
Male	37	82.2
Female	8	17.8
Age		
21-30	12	26.7
31-40	26	57.8
41-50	5	11.1
51-60	1	2.2

Older than 60	1	2.2
Marital Status		
Single	7	15.6
Married	34	75.6
Divorced/Separated	4	8.9
Widowed	0	0
Education Level		
High School Diploma	4	8.9
Associates Degree	9	20
Bachelors Degree	20	44.4
Masters Degree or Higher	12	26.7
Children Under 18		
Yes	28	62.2
No	17	37.8

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, Alphas for All Study Variables

	Mean	SD	Alpha (α)	Possible Range	Actual Range
STS	25.34	9.46	0.93	17-85	17-55
MBI-EXH	2.07	1.43	0.91	0-6	0-5
MBI-CYN	1.71	1.15	0.77	0-6	0-4
MBI-PE	4.78	1.04	0.82	0-6	1-6
General Positive Emotion	3.51	0.79	0.92	1-5	1.8-4.9
General Negative	1.44	0.49	0.84	1-5	1-3.3
Fear	1.27	.33	0.63	1-5	1-2.17
Sadness	1.45	.48	0.67	1-5	1-2.8
Hostility	1.64	.78	0.88	1-5	1-4.6
Guilt	1.22	.36	0.56	1-5	1-2.5
Self-assurance	2.96	.85	0.85	1-5	1.33-4.67
Attentiveness	3.65	.74	0.76	1-5	2-5
Joviality	3.16	.84	0.92	1-5	1.5-4.62
Pride	19.82	3.86	0.91	5-25	10-25
Stigma	8.09	2.56	0.66	3-15	3-14
Exposure - CP	9.59	17.71	-	-	0-100
Exposure - SV	16.64	35.68	-	-	0-200

Table 3. Inter-correlations Between All Study Variables

	STS	EXH	CYN	PE	GP	GN	STIG	EXP-CP	EXP-SV	Fear	Sad	Host	Guilt	Self-Assur	Atten	Jov	Pride
STS	-																
EXH	**.40**	-															
CYN	.27	**.51**	-														
PE	**-.31**	-.22	**-.37**	-													
GP	**-.53**	-.24	-.11	.17	-												
GN	**.43**	**.54**	**.31**	-.28	**-.33**	-											
STIG	**.38**	.09	**.54**	-.27	**-.45**	.29	-										
EXP-CP	.00	.18	-.18	.12	.04	.13	.09	-									
EXP-SV	.21	.03	-.19	-.01	.21	.15	-.13	**.84**	-								
Fear	**.35**	**.39**	.18	-.24	-.13	**.82**	.17	.05	.06	-							
Sad	**.59**	**.33**	.25	**-.36**	**-.55**	**-.46**	**.35**	-.07	.03	**.35**	-						
Host	.26	.31	.09	-.11	**-.60**	**.62**	.07	.04	.20	**.60**	**.49**	-					
Guilt	.31	**.41**	**.36**	-.30	**-.41**	**.34**	**.34**	-.19	-.16	**.52**	**.47**	**.67**	-				
Self Assur	**-.45**	-.24	-.31	.17	**.89**	-.27	.23	**.36**	.22	-.12	**-.45**	**-.36**	**-.39**	-			

	STS	EXH	CYN	PE	GP	GN	STIG	EXP-CP	EXP-SV	Fear	Sad	Host	Guilt	Self-Assur	Atten	Jov	Pride
Atten	**-.42**	-.28	-.27	**.40**	**.88**	-.30	**-.44**	.18	.01	-.06	**-.42**	-.30	**-.36**	**.69**	-		
Jov	**-.38**	-.28	-.09	.26	**.91**	**-.32**	-.13	.03	-.12	-.21	**-.49**	**-.60**	**-.36**	**.83**	.71	-	
Pride	-.02	-.12	**-.52**	**.44**	.14	.10	**-.38**	.21	.18	.03	-.04	.08	-.17	.23	**.54**	.06	-

All correlations above .41 are significant at the *p* < .01 level.
Correlations above .30 are significant at the *p* < .05 level.
All other correlations are non-significant.

STS=Secondary Traumatic Stress, EXH =Maslach Burnout Inventory Exhaustion Subscale, CYN=Maslach Burnout Inventory Cynicism Subscale, PE=Maslach Burnout Inventory Professional Efficacy Subscale, GP=PANAS-X General Positive Emotions Scale, GN=PANAS-X General Negative Emotions Scale, STIG= Stigma Subscale, EXP-CP= Exposure to Child Pornography, EXP-SV= Exposure to Sexual Violence

Table 4. Summary of General Positive Emotion as a Moderator on the Relationship between Total Number of Disturbing Media Cases and STS.

Model 1

	Standardized B	Sig.
GenPos	-.62	.01
TotalCases	.20	.18

Model 2	GenPos	-.65	.01
	TotalCases	.62	.01
	GenPosXTotalCases	-.54	.02

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to contribute to existing research on exposure to disturbing media and STS and burnout by examining the role of emotions in the relationship between exposure and those negative outcomes. Several studies have identified that working with disturbing media leads to several negative psychological outcomes (Burns et al., 2008; Divine, 2010; Perez et al., 2010; Stevenson, 2007). This study examined relationships between disturbing media exposure, and the negative outcomes of secondary traumatic stress and burnout.

Previous studies have not examined the role of emotions in this process. In addition, because previous research has mostly focused on qualitative information, I included emotion questions to quantitatively test potential reasons why disturbing media leads to burnout and STS. Because of qualitative research suggesting the work is highly emotional (Burns et al., 2008; Perez et al., 2010; Stevenson, 2007), and potentially stigmatizing (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999) I hypothesized that negative emotions would mediate the relationship between exposure to disturbing media and STS and burnout. I also hypothesized that feelings of stigmatization would mediate the relationship between exposure to disturbing media and burnout and STS. In addition, I hypothesized that positive emotions about one's work would moderate the relationship between exposure and STS and burnout. Little research has quantitatively examined the role of emotion in the development of burnout and STS. In addition, this is the first study to quantitatively examine the role of emotion in those that work with disturbing media.

An additional aim of this study was to explore the relationship of work with disturbing media to the dirty work paradigm, studied by Ashforth (2001), Ashforth and Kreiner (1999; 2002), and Ashforth, Kreiner, Clark, and Fugate (2007). According to the criteria for dirty work (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999), law enforcement fits into the high prestige and social taint category of dirty work, because officers work with stigmatized populations and require heavy training. However, what is unique about work with disturbing media, based on the results of this study, is that it may also have a physical taint component. In the open-ended questions, one participant stated, "I have always thought of the bad things I see at work as being a pile of manure. Just because you walk past a pile of manure does not mean you have to get down and roll in it." Statements like this suggest that there is a component of filth and physical dirtiness to the work. Future research may consider examining how "dirty work" with more than one dimension of taint differs from the traditional categorization of dirty work.

Summary of Findings

Participants reported experiencing moderate levels of burnout, with some even experiencing high levels of burnout. Most participants in this sample were not experiencing secondary traumatic stress, although three people were experiencing at least moderate STS. Although the results did not support the hypothesis that more exposure led to more burnout and STS, these findings suggest negative outcomes still occur in this type of work and should be dealt with by mental health services professionals. It is possible that disturbing media is the culprit for the stress, but the number of cases one has worked with does not relate to the levels of these negative outcomes.

A possible explanation for the finding that exposure was not related to burnout and STS is that the work in general can lead to negative outcomes, and that factors other than exposure to disturbing media may be contributing. For example, some of the police critical incidents outlined by Gershon et al. (2009) such as responding to bloody crime scenes, personally knowing a victim, or attending the funeral of a fellow officer, and overseas deployments are all possible stressors for this sample as well. In addition, those who have to deal with people more often, whether in a disturbing media case or other setting, may experience more burnout as noted by Maslach (1997).

Another potential explanation could be that having exposure to disturbing media even only once can lead to negative outcomes, and the difference between those with more and less exposure is small compared to the difference between those exposed and not exposed. This research question could not be tested due to the small sample (N=6) of officers who had never been exposed to disturbing media.

In addition, because I did not find that more exposure led to more burnout or STS, I could not test the hypotheses that emotions played a mediating role in the development of burnout and STS. However, the results indicated that pride and stigma, as well as some of the emotions measured by the PANAS-X, related to the burnout and STS in this sample. In addition, I found that positive emotion moderated the relationship between total number of cases and STS. However, this effect seems to be driven by two outliers in the sample. The median number of disturbing media cases is 14, but two participants had over 100 cases. One of these participants had high positive emotion and less STS while the other had low positive emotion and high STS. Although, this effect is what I predicted, in a small sample such as this one, these two high leverage cases likely have

influence on the results. In addition, these effect sizes are large, but I likely did not have the appropriate power to test for moderation. Therefore, this finding should be reevaluated in future research to see if it can be replicated.

Pride seems to be a variable of interest in this sample, as the open-ended results revealed that some officers enjoyed making the world a better place with their work. Those who felt more pride felt less cynical and had more professional efficacy. This finding suggests that law enforcement units may want to work harder in order to instill pride in their employees. Many of the officers said that they knew they were taking the worst possible people off the streets and that they wanted this job in order to catch them. Supervisors should continue to remind officers of these outcomes and positive works that they are doing, and perhaps that will decrease burnout in the officers.

In addition, those that felt more stigmatized were more cynical and experienced more STS. Although stigma did not mediate the relationships between exposure and negative outcomes in this sample, the direct relationships with negative outcomes indicate that this is a variable that should be examined in future research with larger samples. Also, future research will need to determine whether stressors other than exposure are contributing to feelings of stigmatization.

Although only some of the negative outcomes were related to pride and stigma, it is important to note that in the qualitative results these two experiences were referred to on many occasions. For example, the officer who cannot form relationships with women because of his work also scored fairly high on the stigma items. In addition, the officer who said he deals with work by "knowing he'll be securing the conviction and imprisonment of a pedophile" also had the highest possible score on all the "pride" items.

Therefore, these two constructs are highly relevant to the study of law enforcement, and research on them should continue.

Through the open-ended questions, I found that few people (*N*=2) felt that unexpected exposure was different. Based on qualitative research, this is surprising because past investigators have stated they have many strategies before viewing disturbing media such as ensuring they do so in the morning to ensure plenty of time before being with their families, as well as preparing themselves to see the worst images possible was helpful (Burns et al., 2008).

Limitations

Many other factors can be contributing to the negative outcomes that officers experience besides the number of disturbing media cases. In this study, number of disturbing media cases was not a contributor. In addition, it is unknown when the last time a participant in the study had to view disturbing media. One officer may have had 50 cases, but those cases could have taken place months ago, while another officer may have had five cases but have been exposed more recently. I did not include a question on when the latest exposure to disturbing media took place, which may have been useful to the study. Perhaps it is not the sheer number of cases, but the length of time since one has been last exposed that is predictive of the negative outcomes. Future research may consider examining this factor. Lastly, it is possible that the most stressed officers declined to participate in the study due to their vast workloads. We only had two participants with over 100 cases, but having more people with higher caseloads in the sample may produce different results.

In addition, this study was cross-sectional, so there is an inability to determine whether exposure to stressors such as disturbing media would be able to cause STS and burnout, or if there are other factors involved.

In addition, in a test of mediated or moderated regression, it would be necessary to have well over 100 participants included in the study, based on Baron and Kenny (1986). However, my sample size was small and I was unable to locate additional participants to include in the sample. Therefore, findings may have been different with a larger sample size. Furthermore, the small sample size left me with insufficient data to make statistical comparisons between the exposed and not exposed. Only few of the participants did not have exposure to disturbing media (N=6).

The officers in this sample came from at least four different units in the agency, and may have different practices at their respective offices. I did not include a question asking which agency the participants came from, which may have been helpful in determining whether the nature of the work differs significantly across areas.

Future Research

Because previous research has made the connection between exposure and negative outcomes (Divine, 2010; Perez et al., 2010), future research should continue to investigate these relationships and explore mediating and moderating factors. Divine (2010) found that coping was an important moderator of exposure-outcome relationships. In addition, I found several correlations that may have been significant with a larger sample size, suggesting more variables may be predictive of negative outcomes in a different sample.

It would also be interesting to see if other factors play a role in the development of negative outcomes, such as support from family and coworkers, religion, or personality. Research has shown that social support may serve as a moderator in the development of negative outcomes (Cherniss, 1980). Based on the open-ended responses, it seems as though the amount of workload placed on the officers may be contributing to negative outcomes. Officers stated that they must do a lot of paperwork and that they do not have enough staff to get all their work done. This is consistent with research by Brough (2004), suggesting that "operational hassles" such as excessive paperwork and hoax calls can lead to psychological stress as well. Future research may determine if the workload of the officers is contributing to the negative outcomes.

In addition, it may be interesting to look at supervisory practices as a buffer for the negative outcomes. For example, supervisory practices that allow for open expression of opinions from the employees and participation in problem solving resulted in reduced stress in a sample of nurses (Gray-Toft & Anderson, 1985). The officers in this sample came from several different units, so each may have a supervisor that acts differently. In the open-ended responses, some officers indicated that their supervisors are doing a good job of monitoring when an officer may be in need of some resources to deal with the resulting stress of the work. It is unknown whether all sites have supervisors engaging in similar practices, so this may be a question for future researchers to examine.

I found that stigma related to the development of burnout and STS, and was the most important predictor for both cynicism and STS. Because this finding supports the research on dirty work (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999), it would be interesting to look at

burnout and STS among other dirty work occupations, and examine the role of stigma in the development of negative outcomes with different samples.

Conclusion

While this research did not conclude that exposure to disturbing media was related to the development of negative outcomes, it can be concluded that some agents are experiencing negative outcomes. This research was unable to examine what the drivers of these negative outcomes specifically were, but research on law enforcement stressors suggests that operational hassles are a major strain and can lead to psychological issues (Brough, 2004). Future research on disturbing media and other law enforcement stressors should continue to examine possible mediators and moderators between the stressors and negative outcomes, as this information will be helpful in determining how to help officers experiencing stress. Additionally, it is important not to dismiss exposure to disturbing media as a driver of negative outcomes because past research has confirmed that exposure has been an issue (Divine, 2010; Perez et al., 2010). Further, this research has also explored various factors that are contributors to stressful outcomes, such as negative emotions and stigmatization. Further research should continue to examine these variables and determine if they can still provide a link between the drivers of negative outcomes and the experience of those outcomes.

CHAPTER V

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CHAPTER VI

APPENDIX

Online Survey Content

Please answer the questions as accurately as possible. Make sure your answer reflects the possible response options provided (i.e., Never – Very Often) for each section.

Section 1

Read each statement and indicate <u>how frequently</u> it is true for you by circling the corresponding number.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	**Rarely**	**Occasionally**	**Often**	**Very Often**

1. I feel emotionally numb.	1 2 3 4 5
2. My heart starts pounding when I think about my work.	1 2 3 4 5
3. It seems as if I relive the trauma(s) or stress experienced by victims or those with whom I am to protect.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I have trouble sleeping.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I feel discouraged about the future.	1 2 3 4 5
6. Reminders of my work upset me.	1 2 3 4 5
7. I have little interest in being around others.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I feel jumpy.	1 2 3 4 5
9. I am less active than usual.	1 2 3 4 5
10. I think about my work when I don't intend to.	1 2 3 4 5
11. I have trouble concentrating.	1 2 3 4 5
12. I avoid people, places, or things that remind me of my work.	1 2 3 4 5
13. I have disturbing dreams about my work.	1 2 3 4 5
14. I want to avoid working on some cases.	1 2 3 4 5
15. I am easily annoyed.	1 2 3 4 5
16. I expect something bad to happen.	1 2 3 4 5
17. I notice gaps in my memory about cases.	1 2 3 4 5

Section 2

Read each statement and indicate <u>how frequently</u> it is true for you by circling the corresponding number.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Daily

18. I feel emotionally drained from my work.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

19. I feel used up at the end of the workday.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

20. I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

21. Working all day is really a strain for me.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

22. I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my work.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

23. I feel burned out from my work.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

24. I feel I am making an effective contribution to my assigned mission.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

25. I have become less interested in my work.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

26. I have become less enthusiastic about my work.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

27. In my opinion, I am good at my job.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

28. I feel exhilarated when I accomplish something at work.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

29. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

30. I just want to do my job and not be bothered.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

31. I have become more cynical about whether my work contributes to anything.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

32. I doubt the significance of my work.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

33. At work, I feel confident that I am effective at getting things done.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Section 3

Emotions (adapted from the PANAS-X, Watson & Clark, 1994)

This scale consists of a number of words and phrases that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then

mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate t o what extent you have felt this way during the past

few weeks **as a result of your work**. Use the following scale to record your answers:

1	2	3	4	5
very slightly	a little	moderately	quite a bit	extremely
				or not at all

_____ cheerful	_____ sad	_____ active	_____ angry at self
_____ disgusted	_____ calm	_____ guilty	_____ enthusiastic
_____ attentive	_____ afraid	_____ joyful	_____ downhearted
_____ tired	_____ nervous	_____ sluggish	_____ lonely
_____ distressed	_____ daring	_____ shaky	_____ sleepy
_____ blameworthy	_____ happy	_____ excited	_____ determined
_____ strong	_____ timid	_____ hostile	_____ frightened
_____ scornful	_____ alone	_____ proud	_____ relaxed
_____ alert	_____ jittery	_____ interested	_____ irritable
_____ upset	_____ lively	_____ loathing	_____ delighted
_____ angry	_____ ashamed	_____ confident	_____ inspired
_____ bold	_____ at ease	_____ energetic	_____ fearless
_____ blue	_____ scared	_____ concentrating	_____ disgusted
_____ drowsy	_____ dissatisfied		with self
	with self		

Section 4

1. When I meet someone new, I do not want to tell him or her about what I do at work

    SD   D   N   A   SA

2. I am concerned about the way that others (outside of OSI) perceive me because of the work I do
    SD   D   N   A   SA

3. I am proud of the work that I do
    SD   D   N   A   SA

4. I feel a sense of personal fulfillment at work
    SD   D   N   A   SA

5. I feel good about myself when I am at work
    SD   D   N   A   SA

6. I feel that the work I do makes the world a better place
    SD   D   N   A   SA

___ Y ____N   Have you ever been exposed to child pornography at the agency?

_____If so, how long ago were you exposed?

_____ What would you estimate is the number of cases you've worked on at the agency that involved child pornography?

_____ What would you estimate is the number of cases you've worked on at the agency that involved other sexual violence?

_____ Is the experience of being exposed different when the exposure is unexpected?