

Risky working environment and the factors supporting mental health

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The level of anxiety, stress and burnout of employees translates into their psychophysical functioning and it depends on situation. Soldiers who perform parachute jumps as part of their duties experience increased levels of arousal before and during the jump, making them particularly vulnerable to specific psychophysical and emotional reactions, including anxiety. The aim of the current study was to examine the effect of arousal resulting from parachute jumping on the level of anxiety and performance of cognitive tasks concerning attention and cognitive flexibility. A total of 77 professional soldiers employed in positions involving parachute jumping, aged 21-45, participated in the study. The research was conducted under three experimental conditions: before and after parachute jumps and in a control condition – during a day without jumping. Participants completed tests and tasks measuring mood, attention, divergent thinking, and anxiety. Contrary to theoretical premises and hypotheses, the results did not show changes in cognitive flexibility or attention performance as a result of arousal induced by parachute jumping. However, the results suggest that jumping experience (a greater number of jumps performed so far) reduces the level of anxiety associated with jumping.

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