Staff Perceptions on the Role and Value of Chaplains in First Responder and Military Settings: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Background

Chaplains in first responder and military services support staff prior to, during, and after critical incidents. Some studies have explored the role of chaplains in these settings predominantly in the military, and from chaplains' perspectives. However, few studies have explored the perspective of staff. This scoping review aims to map the literature on staff perceptions of the role and value of chaplains in first responder and military settings.

Method

A scoping review using the Arksey & O'Malley (2003) and Joanna Briggs Institute Scoping Review Methodology was conducted. English language, peer-reviewed, and grey literature in CINAHL, PubMed, PsychINFO, ProQuest and Google Scholar from 2004-2019 was reviewed for inclusion. Records were included if they provided staff perspectives on the role and value of chaplains in first responder and military settings. The initial search identified 491 records after removal of duplicates. All titles and abstracts were then screened for relevance to the research question and 84 were selected for full-text review. Seven records were included in final review; five dissertations and two peer-reviewed articles. Five of these were from the military and two from the police. Data was extracted and thematically analysed to identify staff perceptions of the role, skills and attributes, and value of chaplains in first responder and military settings.

Results

Staff understood the role of chaplain to include the provision of spiritual and pastoral care, guidance, and in the case of police, providing scene support. Staff from all of the services identified requisite skills and attributes for chaplains such as being available, approachable and engaged; counselling; maintaining confidentiality and trust; being organisationally aware; and possessing distinct personality traits and knowledge of specialty content areas. The value chaplains brought to their services emerged from chaplains being trusted as a result of being proactively available for staff, families and bystanders for formal and informal conversation; organisational belonging and awareness resulting in enhanced staff satisfaction and retention; and promoting staff physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing.

Conclusions

Although military and police staff identified spiritual, psychological and social benefits to chaplains maintaining an active and visible role in their services, the small number of papers identified make generalization of these findings to other first responder services problematic. Further research is therefore required to understand the impact of the chaplain's role as part of the care team in first responder services.

Key words: chaplain, pastoral care, spiritual care, military, emergency responder, paramedic, allied health personnel.

1. Background

The term 'chaplain' originates from the Latin word 'cappa' which means hooded cloak or cape (Carey et al., 2016). The first historical reference to chaplains emerged from France in approximately 316-397 AD when St Martin de Tours, a Roman centurion, split his own cloak in half and shared it with a beggar (Carey et al., 2016; Paget & McCormack, 2006). Chaplains have continued to provide practical ministry and a ministry of presence – being present to support and care for those experiencing hardship or illness, and ensuring people are not alone – ever since (Paget & McCormack, 2006).

Embedded across a range of sectors including military, hospitals, and prisons for hundreds of years, chaplains have more recently become a part of first responder services to support staff prior to, during, and after critical incidents (Cisney & Ellers, 2009). They may work with staff to promote wellbeing and resilience in their everyday work and life; provide on-scene support to staff, patients, and bystanders exposed to trauma and distress; and in the aftermath of critical incidents provide psychological first aid, pastoral care, and support (Cisney & Ellers, 2009; McFarlane, 2019; Robinson, 2011). Chaplains work independently and as part of wellbeing teams which may also include psychologists and peer support officers.

The focus of this scoping review was to explore what is known about staff perceptions on the role of chaplains, and the value they add to first responder and military services. These diverse organizations were included in the review due to lack of available research on chaplains, specifically in the ambulance service, and more broadly in first responder

services in general. First responder services incorporate police, fire, paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMT) and other rescue organizations. Like first responders, military personnel work in evolving and potentially volatile situations, and encounter trauma and death, not only on the battlefield, but also in civilian settings such as a motor vehicle accidents, suicides, or death in the line of duty. (Seddon, Jones, & Greenberg, 2011). In addition, there is an established history of using chaplains to support military staff.

Established chaplain researchers have emphasized the need for more research in this space and the importance of incorporating spiritual care as part of an holistic model of health care (Carey & Cohen, 2015; Carey et al., 2016; Stallinga, 2013; World Health Organisation, 1946). Furthermore, there is greater need to understand how chaplains work individually and as part of a team (Carey & Rumbold, 2015; Carey, Willis, Krikheli, & O'Brien, 2015; Cunningham, Panda, Lambert, Daniel, & Demars, 2017). The aim of this scoping review was to map the available literature on staff perceptions of the role and value of chaplains in first responder and military settings.

2. Methods

A scoping review of the literature was conducted to map literature and to identify key concepts, sources, and knowledge gaps (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Peters, 2017; Tricco et al., 2018). This review was conducted with reference to the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) methodological framework, and the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) (Tricco et al., 2018), and is appropriate for use where limited research

has been undertaken, or where evidence is emerging (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac, Colquhoun, & O'Brien, 2010). The Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework consists of the following stages: 1) identify the research question, 2) identify relevant studies, 3) selection of appropriate studies, 4) charting the data, and 5) collating, summarising and reporting of results. An optional sixth stage of consultation with stakeholders may also be included (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Joanna Briggs Institute, 2015). As evidence arises from a range of sources, formal assessment of the quality of studies is frequently not performed (Joanna Briggs Institute, 2015).

2.1 Stage 1: Identification of Research Question

The purpose of stipulating the research question in stage one is to "provide a roadmap for subsequent stages" (Levac et al., 2010, p. 3). Levac et al. (2010) further state research questions should be broad enough to summarize the available evidence yet clear enough to provide scope for the enquiry. Consequently, the guiding question for this scoping review was "What is known about staff perceptions on the role and value of chaplains in first responder and military settings?"

2.2 Stage 2: Study Selection

A systematic search of electronic databases (CINAHL, PubMed, PsychINFO, and ProQuest), and the first 50 results in Google Scholar, were searched to identify peer-reviewed and grey literature. Hand searching of reference lists and selected texts was also conducted. A specialist librarian was consulted to determine the most suitable databases, and to construct a comprehensive search strategy based on the research question. Papers were limited to English language and published between 1 January 2004-2019. This

timeframe correlates with the observed increased volume and quality of chaplaincy research (Delaney & Fitchett, 2018; Fitchett, 2017; Weaver, Flannelly, & Liu, 2008). Search terms were informed by two domains, which included keyword and MeSH terms.

2.2.1 First Responder Populations

Terms included ambulance, paramedic, first responder, emergency medical technician, emergency medical service, police, law enforcement, firefighter, military, defence forces, air force personnel, armed forces personnel, army personnel, navy personnel, United States Marine Corps and military personnel.

2.2.2 Chaplains

Terms included chaplain, clergy, pastoral care, spiritual care, and spiritual wellbeing.

The initial search produced 491 articles after removal of duplicates.

2.3 Stage 3: Selection of Appropriate Studies

Reviewers met at the beginning of the review process to discuss inclusion and exclusion criteria, alignment with research question and consistency. Two reviewers independently assessed each article for eligibility and extracted data before comparing results. The lead author (KTL) screened all papers with remaining authors independently conducting the second screening. In line with the iterative nature of the scoping review, consultation between reviewers was ongoing (Joanna Briggs Institute, 2015). Discrepancies were resolved during meetings between reviewers or via personal communication between meetings.

2.3.1 Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria were formulated using the Population, Concept, Context (PCC)

format (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Joanna Briggs Institute, 2015). Therefore, any record that included staff perspectives of the role of chaplains and the value they add to first responder or military services was eligible for inclusion. For the purpose of this review, first responder services include Police, Fire, Ambulance or Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Military services included Air Force, Army and Navy.
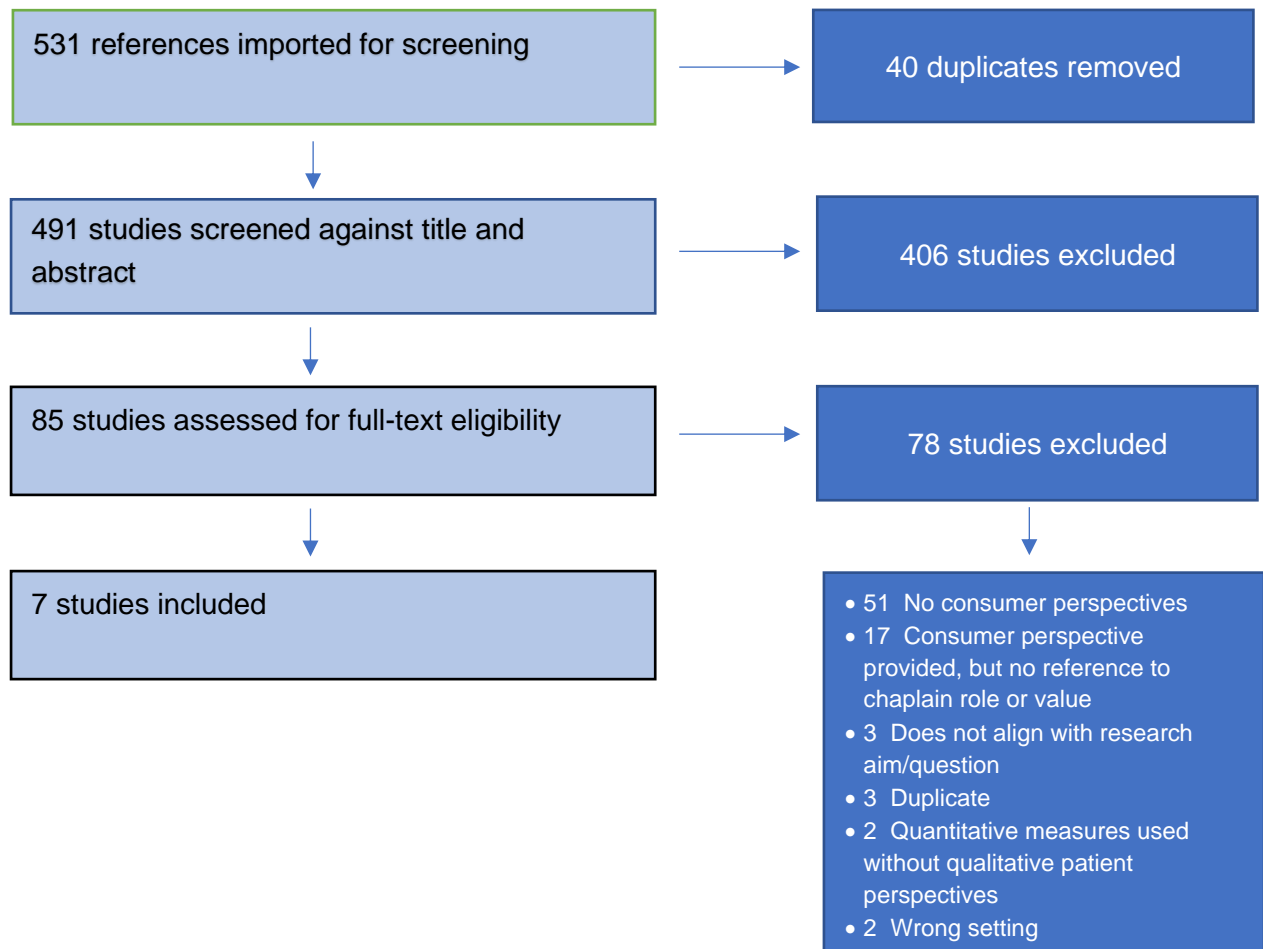
2.3.2 Exclusion Criteria

Studies involving chaplains outside of the nominated services were excluded (eg. hospital chaplains).

Articles identified as appropriate for review were imported and stored in Covidence. This also allowed reviewers to document rationale for decisions.

All titles and abstracts were screened for relevance to the research question and 84 were selected for full-text review. The 84 results were independently reviewed against the inclusion/exclusion criteria by two authors. Seven articles were included in the final review, as summarised in the modified PRISMA flowchart (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: PRISMA Flowchart

531 references imported for screening → 40 duplicates removed

491 studies screened against title and abstract → 406 studies excluded

85 studies assessed for full-text eligibility → 78 studies excluded

7 studies included

- 51 No consumer perspectives
- 17 Consumer perspective provided, but no reference to chaplain role or value
- 3 Does not align with research aim/question
- 3 Duplicate
- 2 Quantitative measures used without qualitative patient perspectives
- 2 Wrong setting

2.4 Stage 4: Charting the Data

This data extraction process provides the reader with a descriptive summary of results, and should align with the aim of the scoping review (Joanna Briggs Institute, 2015). A charting form was developed as a

result of collaborative discussions between reviewers *a priori*, and used to extract data from selected studies with the purpose of addressing the research question (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010). This became an iterative process as unanticipated themes emerged. Extracted data included first author, date, title, aims/objectives, participants, data sources/methodology, and key findings (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Joanna Briggs Institute, 2015) (see Table 1).

2.5 Stage 5: Collating, Summarizing and Reporting of Results

While a scoping review is designed to present a narrative account of the identified literature rather than 'synthesize' evidence, specific steps are taken to enhance rigour (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Levac et al. (2010, p. 6) propose three steps: analyse the data (collating and summarising), report the results, and apply meaning to the results. Data analysis occurred through iterative discussions between reviewers, and results of the review included a descriptive numerical summary, as well as a 'thematic construction' (Bindley, Lewis, Travaglia, & DiGiacomo, 2019; Levac et al., 2010). Unanticipated findings that emerged from the scoping review were staff opinions on the requisite skills and attributes of chaplains. Consequently, the major categories identified were (1) the chaplain's role, (2) the chaplain's skills and attributes, and (3) the chaplain's value to the organisation. These results were analysed in line with the aim of the scoping review and research question.

2.6 Stage 6: Consultation

Rigour in scoping reviews can be enhanced through consultation with practitioners and consumers (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010). These additional perspectives can enhance meaning and applicability to the scoping review (Levac et al., 2010). Consultation with a limited number of stakeholders within ambulance services took place regarding additional sources of data for inclusion.

Table 1: Tabulated data from review

Author (year)	Title of the study	Aims/objectives	Participants	Data sources/Methodology	Key findings
Bowlus (2018)	The relationship between religious coping and resilience among senior army leaders in the United States Army War College	To determine the relationship between resilience and religious coping among senior Army officers.	21 Army War College students	**Methodology:** Descriptive correlational **Data source:** Dissertation - mixed methods survey and interviews.	1) Chaplain's role included provision of spiritual leadership, prayer, religious services fellowship opportunities, encouraging religious involvement, teaching religious practices, and inquiring about spiritual life. 2) Skills or attributes essential for this role included being proactively available, visible, approachable, checking on the leaders, being an advisor, helping with personal issues, following-up on leaders' needs, and being organisationally aware. 3) Value was recognised in promoting connection, shared experiences, understanding the organization and therefore demands on leaders, providing friendship, being present at right time and place. 4) Suggestions for improvements or perceived barriers to chaplains were lack of maturity and experience, rank (similar

					rank preferred), and lack of Catholic chaplains.
Cafferky et. al. (2017)	Air Force Chaplains' perceived effectiveness on service member's resilience and satisfaction	To examine male United States Air Force (USAF) service members' (SM) perceptions of chaplains' effectiveness related to the importance SMs placed on spirituality, resilience, family coping, relationship satisfaction, satisfaction with the Air Force (AF), and how rank and location of family residence moderated these associations.	3777 USAF male active duty SMs who completed the 2011 USAF Community Assessment Survey	**Methodology:** Quantitative survey **Data sources:** USAF Community Assessment Survey.	1) No data identifying staff perceptions on role of chaplain. 2) Value was recognised through the significant positive contribution to resilience, family coping, relational satisfaction and satisfaction with the AF. 3) Quantitative data only available.
Chang, et.al. (2012)	Spiritual needs and spiritual care for veterans at end of life and their families.	To explore the perspectives of Veterans receiving Veterans Affairs (VA) palliative care and their families.	17 male Caucasian Veterans and 9 family members	**Methodology:** Grounded theory **Data source:** Semi-structured individual interviews.	1) Chaplain's role included providing spiritual care, religious ritual, and pastoral care. 2) Skills or attributes essential for this role included knowledge of combat/trauma and counselling skills to help veterans process guilt, and awareness of link
					between Veterans' service and their spirituality. 3) Value was recognised in a 'ministry of presence', personal and family support. 4) Suggestions for improvements or perceived barriers were lack of chaplain availability.
Gouse (2017)	Ministry of Presence: An investigation of communication between police chaplains and local civilians in crisis.	To examine the nature of the ministry of presence of chaplains particularly in terms of their listening behaviour when engaged with local civilians in crisis under an expanded police chaplaincy model.	28 chaplains, 11 law enforcement officers, 13 civilians	**Methodology:** Ethnographic **Data source:** Dissertation - qualitative interviews	1) Chaplain's role focussed on scene support. 2) Skills or attributes essential for this role included the ability to effectively communicate, empathise, listen, comfort, and demonstrate compassion. 3) Value was recognised in their ministry of presence, particularly through the ability to bring a sense of calm to staff and civilians, to act as a 'buffer or bridge' between police and the community in crisis situations, and to allow police to more efficiently do their job. Chaplain care of civilians had a stress-reducing effect on police.
Hale (2013)	Professional Naval Chaplaincy: The Ministry of the Navy Chaplain in a US Navy Bureau of	To determine the attitudes of professional hospital staff and ancillary staff regarding the	250 Navy staff aboard one ship	**Methodology:** phenomenological and ethnographic	1) Chaplain's role included traditional ministry roles (e.g. minister or priest); and providing moral, spiritual, and pastoral care.

	Medicine and Surgery Hospital.	role and value of the US Navy chaplain in a US Naval hospital.		**Data source:** Dissertation - cross-sectional online questionnaire.	2) Skills or attributes essential for this role included empathy, communication, comfort, trust and maintaining confidentiality. 3) Value was recognised in the chaplain's ability to maintain a ministry of presence, to work as part of a multidisciplinary team, and to provide spiritual and moral care to patients.
Moosbrugger (2006)	The Leadership of a Law Enforcement Chaplain – influence, effectiveness and benefit to the agency and community: a case study of the Arlington Police Department, Arlington, Texas.	The purpose of this study was to provide information from law enforcement officers' on how chaplains benefits their professional pursuits and personal life.	29 police officers from Arlington, Texas	**Methodology:** Phenomenological **Data source:** Qualitative case study	1) Chaplain's role included attending scenes to support police, including delivering death notices. Also, in traditional duties including providing pastoral care, and conducting weddings and funerals. 2) Skills or attributes essential for this role included being available, approachable, non-judgemental, self-aware, acting as a positive role model, being supportive of multifaith staff and confidential. 3) Value was recognised in 'bridging the gap' between police and community and reducing stress by working alongside police officers in the field and in the station. Promotion of wellbeing through
					work/life balance, family support, spiritual leadership, sound decision making (personal and professional) and building morale was also valued. Chaplains successful in these skills were seen as a valid first point of contact when seeking help. 4) Chaplains value to the organisation was acknowledged through comprehension of police and civilian experiences, enhancing staff retention, and humanising the public for officers.
Roberts (2016)	A Comprehensive plan for providing chaplaincy support for wounded female soldiers: A Delphi study	The purpose of this study was to build consensus on a comprehensive plan and model for creating a system by which male chaplains could provide effective support to wounded female soldiers.	10 female soldiers, 11 female chaplains	**Methodology:** Feminist Systems Theory **Data source:** Modified qualitative Delphi study.	1) Chaplain's role included provision of religious, pastoral and spiritual care. 2) Skills or attributes essential for this role included 'caregiving traits', experience with trauma, trustworthiness, experience of women after sexual assault. 3) Value was recognised in visiting staff and being actively engaged, neutrality (i.e. not in chain of command), assisting staff to seek further help, assisting staff to find forgiveness, and reducing stress.
					4) Suggestions for improvements or perceived barriers were lack of life experience, visibility and established relationships. 5) Trust of chaplain regardless of gender was possible with most women if longer term relationships had been developed.

3. Results

3.1 Characteristics of Included Studies

Of the seven records included in this review, five were dissertations and two original research articles. Five were from military settings and two from first responder (police) services. All articles were from the United States of America (USA), and the majority of participants were male, with the exception of one study that focused on female soldiers.

A significant gap in research from first responder services was observed. Only two papers from police services were found, both of which were dissertations. No information was available from ambulance, fire, or other emergency services.

3.2 Key Themes

3.2.1 The Chaplain's Role

Six records specifically focused on chaplain roles, which included providing (1) spiritual support or guidance, (2) pastoral care, and (3) scene support. Five of the studies from military and police described chaplains' roles as providing spiritual support or guidance (Bowlus, 2018; Chang et al., 2012; Hale, 2013; Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016). This included the performance of rituals and services such as weddings and funerals (Bowlus, 2018; Chang et al., 2012; Hale, 2013; Moosbrugger, 2006). In addition, advising on spiritual life and practices, encouraging religious involvement, providing opportunities for fellowship, encouraging prayer and reflection, and assisting staff to find forgiveness were considered key roles unique to chaplains in the military (Bowlus, 2018; Chang et al., 2012; Hale, 2013; Roberts, 2016). Evidence from police studies on the other hand, saw chaplains in a less traditional way, with staff reporting

that the example and actions of chaplains reminded them of how they aspired to "live a more spiritual life" (Moosbrugger, 2006, p. 73).

Pastoral support was another emergent theme from the review. This can be defined as "shepherding of an individual or community in terms of guiding, healing, sustaining, reconciling and nurturing their religious faith and well-being within an ecological context" (Carey & Rumbold, 2015, p. 1418). One paper used the specific term '*pastoral care*' (Hale, 2013), while four others used terms that implied pastoral care, such as guiding and supporting (Bowlus, 2018; Chang et al., 2012; Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016).

In describing the role of police chaplains, staff identified that chaplains attend incidents or scenes to support staff and community members (Gouse, 2017; Moosbrugger, 2006). Scene support was not included in the military papers, however chaplain's presence at hospitals to visit wounded or ill soldiers or veterans was considered important (Chang et al., 2012; Hale, 2013; Roberts, 2016).

3.2.2 The Chaplain's Skills and Attributes

The outcomes of the scoping review highlighted that to be effective, chaplains should possess particular skills or attributes. Across both the first responder and military records the requisite skills and attributes of chaplains included (1) being proactively available, approachable and engaged; (2) counselling; (3) maintaining confidentiality and trust; (4) being organisationally aware; and (5) possessing

distinctive personality traits and knowledge of specialty content areas.

Being proactively available, approachable and engaged with staff and veterans were identified as important attributes across military and police papers (Bowlus, 2018; Chang et al., 2012; Gouse, 2017; Hale, 2013; Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016). Sitting with patients in the hospital setting, and working with a multidisciplinary team to support staff and patients was important in one Navy study (Hale, 2013). Understanding the unique demands on leaders and having a chaplain 'check-in' on them was important to Army leaders in another study (Bowlus, 2018; Moosbrugger, 2006). One police study identified the importance of having chaplains present on-scene, and also available for conversations in downtime (Moosbrugger, 2006). Lack of engagement or availability was considered a negative aspect of chaplain care (Chang et al., 2012), leaving staff in one paper feeling isolated and not trusting the chaplain (Roberts, 2016).

Furthermore, providing a '*ministry of presence*' was identified as an important aspect of this attribute. The exact phrase '*ministry of presence*' appeared in three papers (Chang et al., 2012; Gouse, 2017; Hale, 2013) while three other papers described actions or behaviours constituting a ministry of presence including being present at the right time and place (Bowlus, 2018; Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016). Chaplains who possessed these attributes were trusted and perceived as caring (Bowlus, 2018; Roberts, 2016).

Counselling or possessing specific caregiving skills were viewed as important in all settings. Integral to these skills were the ability to communicate, empathize, listen and comfort (Gouse, 2017; Hale, 2013; Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016). A study on female soldiers further outlined the importance of chaplains knowing how to make staff feel comfortable and being able to ask the right questions to encourage soldiers to tell their stories (Roberts, 2016).

The ability to maintain confidentiality and trust were identified in three papers. In one study, 85% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that chaplain confidentiality was important (Hale, 2013). Consequently, it was important for chaplains to not be part of the chain of command as this was perceived to make them less approachable or unlikely/less likely to maintain confidentiality (Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016).

Organizational awareness and shared experiences were viewed as important in four papers; this included an understanding of organizational pressures, procedures, and experiences (Bowlus, 2018; Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016). One study specifically referred to knowledge of military culture and pressures as essential to meeting the particular needs of military leaders (Bowlus, 2018). Military veterans also believed that chaplain's comprehension of the military culture and battle experiences, and the way these contribute to spirituality, was important (Chang et al., 2012). Similarly, one police study described how chaplains with organizational awareness helped staff to cope with the demands on the job, and work-life balance away from the job (Moosbrugger, 2006).

Chaplains having an in-depth knowledge of job-related trauma was viewed as essential to staff in military and police services

(Chang et al., 2012; Gouse, 2017; Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016), and in a study of female soldiers, the need for chaplains to be familiar with the needs of those who had experienced sexual assault was considered important (Roberts, 2016).

In the military and first responder services, being non-judgemental and self-aware were viewed as essential attributes. (Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016). Chaplains maintaining role awareness and understanding their limitations was also valued by female soldiers (Roberts, 2016). The ability to embrace diversity and other faiths was considered to be critical, irrespective of the organisational context (Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016).

3.2.3 The Chaplain's Value to the Organization

The value chaplains added to services emerged from chaplains (1) being proactively available for staff, families and bystanders for formal and informal conversation, (2) organizational awareness and belonging, and (3) promoting and modelling wellbeing.

Chaplains who were proactively available for staff, families and bystanders for formal and informal conversations were valued in first responder and military papers. They helped staff feel comfortable to initiate conversations and seek guidance about personal and professional matters (Hale, 2013; Moosbrugger, 2006). A Navy study found having chaplains available to provide moral and spiritual care to service people as part of a multidisciplinary team was considered "mission essential" by more than 90% of staff (Hale, 2013, p. 35). Similarly, when chaplains initiated conversations with Army leaders, the leaders were left "feeling better afterwards" (Bowlus, 2018, p. 87). For military veterans

in palliative care, the presence of chaplains facilitated supportive conversations with patients and their family members, and feedback indicated both groups wanted more frequent visits and time with chaplains (Chang et al., 2012).

For police, having a chaplain present on-scene held value as a means of 'buffering' from, or building bridges between the police and community (Gouse, 2017; Moosbrugger, 2006). One study found having a chaplain on traumatic scenes alleviated stress and reduced their burden of being the bearer of bad news (Moosbrugger, 2006). It also released the officer to better perform their job, leaving them reassured that members of the public were being supported and comforted by the chaplain (Gouse, 2017; Moosbrugger, 2006). Another study found police believed chaplains bought a sense of calm and comfort to scenes thereby diffusing and deescalating tensions between police and the community. They also promoted enhanced communication, and cooperation, between civilians and police (Gouse, 2017).

Chaplains who were available, approachable and maintained confidentiality were valued when seeking support (Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016). One police officer stated staff felt more comfortable talking to a chaplain than they did a supervisor, psychologist or Employee Assistance Program (EAP) due to fears that the conversation may be relayed to others in the organisation (Moosbrugger, 2006). Similarly, female soldiers felt talking to chaplains was safer due to fears of reprisals from managers (Roberts, 2016).

Organizational awareness and belonging served to promote staff satisfaction and

retention. Shared experiences or an in-depth understanding of soldier/police challenges and cultures gave chaplains knowledge and credibility when supporting staff, and in two papers resulted in increased staff retention (Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016). One police interviewee identified that chaplains were able to work with staff in ways that managers could not by helping officers cope with the job, and boosting morale and productivity resulting in significant financial benefits (Moosbrugger, 2006). Two military papers found chaplains who had deployment experience were more likely to be trusted (Bowlus, 2018; Roberts, 2016).

The chaplain as a person responsible for and capable of promoting wellbeing was valued across the literature. Value lay in supporting staff at work prior to, during or after challenging incidents, and promoting work-life balance (Bowlus, 2018; Gouse, 2017; Moosbrugger, 2006; Roberts, 2016). One Air Force study found chaplains provision of spiritual care promoted resilience, family relationships and organizational satisfaction (Cafferky, Norton, & Travis, 2017). Similarly, an Army study identified that chaplains promoted wellbeing through helping military leaders to reprioritize faith and family before their job, and teaching them effective coping strategies (Bowlus, 2018). Veterans receiving palliative care saw value in chaplains making space to help them work through spiritual issues (Chang et al., 2012). Female soldiers in one study stated that chaplains who were trusted were able to reduce stress through providing support and reassuring soldiers they were not alone, therefore reducing anxiety, depression and overcoming PTSD (Roberts, 2016). One police paper recognized the importance of chaplains in reducing stress and burnout, promoting

work-life balance, and reducing the impact of work on families and relationships (Moosbrugger, 2006). Two military studies found that chaplains helped soldiers and veterans overcome guilt and find forgiveness for perceived transgressions (Chang et al., 2012; Roberts, 2016).

4. Discussion

This review sought to map the literature on first responder and military staff perceptions on the role and value of chaplains. Three clear domains were identified around roles, skills, and attributes, and value to the individual and organization were identified. Of note were the different expectations of the chaplain's role between military and police services. Chaplains in the military were expected to take more of a 'ministry' role and conduct religious rituals (e.g. weddings and funerals) and services for staff, whereas those in police services played more of a supportive role within the organization, allowing staff to pursue their own spiritual or religious activities outside of work.

The findings demonstrated that first responder and military staff perceive the chaplain to be of value when they possess skills and attributes that meet the needs of staff prior to, during (in the case of police), and after both everyday experiences and significant incidents. The results suggested that by having chaplains present to build relationships outside of critical incidents, both staff and the organization benefit. Staff also found value in having someone confidential and supportive to initiate conversations with and to seek guidance from. Additionally, one study participant suggested there may be financial benefits to the organization in having chaplains in the service (Moosbrugger, 2006).

While first responders may attend similar jobs, their different standing in the public eye may impact staff views on and needs of their chaplains. For example, papers on police identified public hostility at times, however ambulance staff are often considered a 'trusted profession', potentially impacting how chaplains in each service can best support staff and bystanders. Chaplains are embedded in these services globally yet evidence supporting their role and value from the perspective of their staff is missing.

Limitations

Despite a methodical review of four databases and searches of grey literature, only data that is publicly available was included. Private data held by first responder or military agencies could not be accessed. This may have limited findings of this research.

Insufficient data was available from diverse staff groups, including from countries outside the USA, women, and people from differing ethnic backgrounds. While some military papers contained information regarding soldiers' previous religious or spiritual beliefs, this data was inconsistent or missing from police papers. This information would be valuable to determine if all staff gain benefit from chaplains, regardless of spiritual or religious beliefs. The absence of primary research was notable in this emerging area of research.

The lack of studies highlighting staff voices also limits the strength of the findings as well as the representativeness of the research.

5. Conclusion

The findings from this review suggest that chaplains provide a positive contribution in military and first responder services, especially relating to supporting staff during times of stress, and promoting wellbeing and retention. However, the small number of studies and the dearth of information about perspectives limits the strengths of the overall results. Further, without evidence of the value of chaplains to first responder services their work and impact may be underutilised and/or under resourced. Lastly, one commentator noted that "the absence of research contributes to the isolation of chaplains from existing care teams in which they could play a crucial role" (Stallinga, 2013, p. 27). Thus, further research is needed to identify how chaplains' presence prior to and at significant events may promote resilience, reduce outcomes associated with scene/organisational stress, and act as a first point of contact or referral agent for psychology and EAP.

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