

Title: How strong we need to be? Brazilian Army Operational Health Course physical admission tests and the TCCC demands

Congress Theme: From shell shock to mental fitness - Human Performance

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Summary

The Brazilian Army (EB) created in 2018 the *Curso de Saúde Operacional (Operational Health Course - CSOp)* as a training program for health personnel to perform pre-hospital care in military operations in different environments as urban, jungle and mountain and to support combat search and rescue (C-SAR) operations. The seven weeks training focused on developing tactical care in a series of military scenarios, working along with Special Operations, Pathfinders, Police and Armed Forces.

The Military Pre-hospital Care (MPHC) has different physical requirements due to Brazil's extensive territory and diverse operational environments. In many operations, reaching the wounded is a challenge. SAR and C-SAR activities require strength, endurance and special skills as swimming and climbing.

Safety was the main objective of creating an initial Physical Aptitude Exam (PAE). Selecting candidates who are in adequate physical condition to withstand the wear and tear required throughout the course, aims to maintain the physical integrity of the military. The increased physical capacity of the students makes possible to raise the level of complexity of the simulated exercises and, consequently, the technical level of the course. This requirement also made it possible to train military with real readiness for operations.

Due to the women increasing role in Armed Forces the test for the CSOp is the first gender neutral in the Brazilian Army.

Methods

During the first two editions of the CSOp was observed that many drills and exercises needed to be softened or interrupted due to the lack of physical conditions of the trainees. For these two initial courses only the regular EB fitness tests were applied with different gender indexes. During the third edition a team from *Brazilian Army Research Institute of Physical Fitness – IPCFEx* mapped the main and specific activities performed during the course. The gender neutrality was pointed as a necessity due to the women being about 90% in technical nursing corps and the understanding that soldiers of both genders will have to perform the same functional tasks during combat. Basic skills such as physical stamina, strength and endurance as well as specific skills necessary to carry out health support in adverse conditions, isolated areas, guerrilla fighting, and poor evacuation resources were selected. Selected skills were dragging and victims transport, speed for short runnings and overcoming obstacles (such as

walls), removing passengers from vehicle onfire, vehicle, overturned or armored, floating, swimming underwater and military swimming.

After this work a physical entrance test was proposed.

Conclusions

As the *Curso de Saúde Operacional (Operational Health Course - CSOp)* became the most rigorous operational training program for Health personnel in the history of EB, gender neutral physical is fundamental do guarantee the efficiency of the medical corps and avoid gender selection to complex missions as well as preserver the physical integrity of the students. There is a need to create specific training programs for military health personnel to prepare the troops, particularly for asymmetric (irregular) combat scenarios in isolated areas with few resources with patterns far from the ordinary standards.