**SUPERVISOR/S:** Anthony O'Brien and Graham Holman  
**PROJECT TITLE:** Suicide by cop. Analysis of New Zealand cases  
**FIELD:** Health  
**DIVISION/SCHOOL:** HECS - School of Health  
**PROJECT LOCATION:** Hamilton  

**PROJECT ABSTRACT:**

Background
Suicide by cop is a well described phenomenon in which an individual intentionally acts in a manner that makes it likely police will respond with deadly force. In some cases individuals make an explicit declaration that they wish to die at the hands of police. In other cases intent is established by analysis of the individual’s actions and statements, and the circumstances of their interaction with police. Our previous research has identified probable cases of suicide by cop in New Zealand but to date there has been no New Zealand research in this area. Reports of deaths involving New Zealand police since 1993 are published on the website of the Independent Police Conduct Authority and are publicly accessible.

Methods
Analysis of all cases of deaths involving New Zealand police since 1993. Using criteria established from a literature review all cases of death will be screened for ‘suicide by cop’. Cases will then be analysed for demographic factors, indications of mental distress or illness, involvement of mental health services and evidence of impact on officers.

Results
The research will be written up for a publication in the health or police literature.

**STUDENT SKILLS:**
- Identification and analysis of relevant literature
- Analytical skills to develop criteria for suicide by cop
- Analysis of narrative reports and extraction of key data and themes
- Writing ability to express complex ideas in clear language
- Interest in health, health policy and social issues
- Capacity to work independently and with supervisors

**PROJECT TASKS:**
- Development of a set of criteria for suicide by cop
- Development of a data extraction template
- Review of the full text of all cases of deaths involving police (approximately 24 cases)
- Identification of cases meeting criteria for suicide by cop in Task 1.
- Analysis of identified cases
- Writing a research report
- Drafting a publication based on criteria of an identified journal
  1. Literature searching
  2. Literature review
  3. Data analysis
  4. Report writing
  5. Project management

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:**
- Student’s Research Poster (as per clause 6 of the Scholarship regulations)
- Research report
- Draft paper for publication