

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Multiple
Branches

Financial Well-Being and Post-Deployment Adjustment Among Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans

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SUMMARY: Service members can have difficulties in many different areas of functioning post-deployment, including emotional, interpersonal, and financial, among others. This study examined the relationship between financial well-being and post-deployment adjustment among OEF/OIF Veterans, with particular attention to Veterans with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depressive disorder (MDD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI). Results suggest that Veterans with greater financial difficulties significantly have more post-deployment adjustment problems.

KEY FINDINGS:

- There was a significant positive association between post-deployment adjustment and financial well-being for OEF/OIF Veterans.
- Veterans with PTSD, MDD, or TBI had lower income and experienced more unemployment than other Veterans.
- When Veterans lacked the money needed to meet basic needs, they were more likely to experience post-deployment adjustment problems, regardless of diagnosis.
- Veterans with higher income who utilized poor money management skills and those with lower income who had good money management skills experienced similar levels of post-deployment adjustment problems.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Provide education for Service members to increase positive money management skills
- Consider targeting Service members with psychiatric diagnose to increase their awareness of financial resources
- Facilitate networking for Service members that will assist them in finding secure employment

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue supporting the provision of a range of mental health services for Service members after homecoming from deployment
- Recommend that all Service members leaving the military are provided with information that will increase financial literacy
- Encourage the integration of money management education into existing service delivery systems for military families

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METHODS

- This study utilized data from the National Post-Deployment Adjustment Survey, in which 3,000 randomly selected Veterans who served in the military after September 11, 2001 were invited to participate. The response rate was 56%, which created a sample size of 1,388.
- Veterans completed questionnaires regarding demographics, military experiences, financial well-being, post-deployment adjustment problems, and clinical outcomes (including MDD, PTSD, and TBI).
- Data were analyzed to determine predictors of financial well-being and post-deployment adjustment problems.

PARTICIPANTS

- Participants were 1,388 OEF/OIF Veterans, with an average age of 36 years.
- This study included Veterans from all military branches (52% Army, 18% Air Force, 16% Navy, 13% Marines, and 1% Coast Guard).
- The race/ethnicity of participants is reported to mirror the current breakdown in the military, with 70% of participants being White and 30% being Black, Latino, or another race/ethnicity.

LIMITATIONS

- The researchers relied upon self-report to measure the variables included in the analyses, which may have biased the data collected.
- The data are cross-sectional, which does not allow for interpretations of causal relationships.
- The measure for a probable TBI did not include measurement of any related symptoms, which did not allow analysis of the relationships among severity of TBI symptoms, financial well-being, and post-deployment adjustment problems.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Examine the possible effects of both civilian employment and participation in Veteran's Administration (VA) disability compensation on post-deployment adjustment
- Explore the relationship between the severity of TBI symptoms and financial well-being in Veterans
- Further analyze the reciprocal relationship between financial well-being and psychiatric diagnoses

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