

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Army

Variables Associated with Intimate Partner Violence in a Deploying Military Sample.

Fonseca, C. A., Schmalings, K. B., Stoeber, C., Gutierrez, C., Blume, A. W., & Russell, M. L. (2006). Variables associated with intimate partner violence in a deploying military sample. *Military Medicine*, 171(7), 627-631.
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SUMMARY: Factors associated with intimate partner violence (IPV) among deploying Soldiers were examined. Soldiers in intimate relationships completed a survey which asked questions about relationship satisfaction, stress, risky alcohol use, and tactics used during intimate relationship conflict. Overall, 449 out of 2,841 deploying Soldiers reported IPV perpetration in the past year and several factors were found to be associated with IPV among deploying Soldiers.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Younger age, less education, less relationship satisfaction, more stress, and risky alcohol use behaviors (e.g., cutting down, others being annoyed, feeling guilty) were significant predictors of Service members' engaging in IPV within the last year.
- Older age, more education, and greater relationship satisfaction were associated with less likelihood of Service members' engaging in IPV within the last year.
- Service members' relationship status (married versus living together) was not significantly associated with IPV.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Continue to provide opportunities for military families that focus on the prevention of IPV during the deployment period
- Disseminate information regarding possible warning signs of IPV to professionals working with young Service members and their partners
- Develop online modules that focus on effective relationship building strategies for Service members and their partners upon reintegration

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Promote the development of structured workshops for deployed Service members and their partners on healthy relationships
- Encourage awareness among professionals working with Service members and their partners during deployment on the importance of developing programming and support for IPV victims
- Build awareness across military branches around the importance of supporting and promoting health and wellness among deployed Service members and their families

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METHODS

- Participants were recruited at the Soldier Readiness Processing site in Fort Bliss, Texas, between March 17, 2003 and November 3, 2003.
- All participants completed a survey that asked questions about their relationship satisfaction, alcohol use, stress, and conflict tactics.
- Statistical analyses were used to determine associations between IPV and relationship satisfaction, alcohol use, stress, and conflict tactics.

PARTICIPANTS

- There were 2,841 participants; a majority of whom were married (96%) and male (90%).
- Most participants identified as White (66%) and a majority (70%) were between 21 and 40 years old with the average age being 35 years old.
- About half were enlisted as noncommissioned officers (46%), a quarter enlisted members (25%), and a quarter commissioned officers (24%) as well as a small group of warrant officers (5%).

LIMITATIONS

- The Soldiers processed for mobilization in this study were older and comprised of more officers than all Active-Duty personnel in the U.S.; therefore, the sample may have been biased.
- Soldiers participated in the survey during a time when they completed many forms throughout the day, which may have compromised the quality of the data that was collected.
- The study relied on self-reported IPV, which could have misrepresented the actual number and severity of tactics used in a conflict with a partner.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Investigate the effects on Service members' IPV perpetration when participating in stress prevention programs that focus on avoiding alcohol
- Evaluate what types of pre-deployment programs are most effective in preventing Service members' IPV perpetration
- Explore the direct relationship between alcohol and Service members' IPV perpetration

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