

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Army

Effects of The Men's Program on U.S. Army Soldiers' Intentions to Commit and Willingness to Intervene to Prevent Rape: A Pretest Posttest Study

Foubert, J. D., & Masin, R. C. (2012). Effects of The Men's Program on U.S. Army soldiers' intentions to commit and willingness to intervene to prevent rape: A pretest posttest study. *Violence and Victims, 27*(6), 911-921.
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SUMMARY: Military sexual assault is a pervasive problem in the military and exploring how to prevent sexual assault is very important. Enlisted male Soldiers were randomly assigned to a 1-hour rape prevention workshop ("The Men's Program") or to a comparison briefing on issues related to sexual assault. Participants in The Men's Program showed significant change in the expected direction on a range of variables assessing likelihood of raping and likelihood of intervening if they witness a sexual assault occurring.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Soldiers who participated in the Men's Program had significantly lower acceptance of rape myths, higher bystander efficacy, and higher willingness to intervene than comparison group soldiers at post-test.
- Soldiers in the comparison group remained the same on all variables (willingness to intervene, bystander efficacy, likelihood of raping, and likelihood of committing sexual assault) except for rape myth acceptance.
- Soldiers in the comparison group reported worse attitudes on several rape myth acceptance subscales after the briefing than at pre-test.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Provide evidence-based rape-prevention workshops for Service members
- Educate Service members regarding the frequency and impact of rape in the military
- Develop work groups of Service members and families that address issues of sexual assault (e.g., rape myths)

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Recommend a systematic review of the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention briefings in military settings
- Continue to support resources for evidence-based rape-prevention workshops for Service members
- Support programs and services that help Service members who have experienced military sexual trauma

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METHODS

- Participants were randomly assigned to The Men's Program or the general briefing and completed anonymous survey packets, a pre-test before the session, and an identical post-test upon completion.
- The Men's Program involves viewing of a video of a male-on-male rape experience to increase empathy for victims; male peer presenters teach ways of supporting rape survivors, facilitate role plays, and lead a discussion.
- The general briefing contained education about the prevalence and definition of sexual assault, how to reduce your risk of being assaulted, and information about rape myths.

PARTICIPANTS

- The sample included 481 enlisted men in the U.S. Army stationed in Germany.
- A total of 237 attended The Men's Program and 244 received the general briefing.
- The mean age of Soldiers was 25.9 years (SD = 6.6); 54% of Soldiers were White, 20% Black, and 16% Latino.

LIMITATIONS

- This study focused on U.S. Army Soldiers stationed in Germany; therefore, results may not generalize to Service members in other branches or Soldiers stationed at other installations.
- All measures were anonymous self-report; participants may have responded in socially desirable ways.
- The study was limited to pre-test/post-test data, lacking any follow-up assessments; therefore, long-term changes could not be assessed.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Examine the long-term impact of The Men's Program and its effectiveness with a more diverse sample
- Supplement self-report data with other indices of behavior would shed important light on subjects' actual behavior
- Examine not only the benefits but also possible adverse effects of briefings and interventions regarding sexual assault prevention

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