

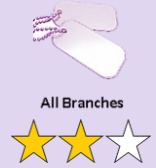


Supporting
Military Families
Through Research
and Outreach

PUTTING RESEARCH TO WORK FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Impact of Vietnam War Service on Veteran's Perceptions of Family Life

Hendrix, C. C., & Anelli, L. M. (1993). Impact of Vietnam War service on Veterans' perceptions of family life. *Family Relations*, 42(1), 87-92.



135 Vietnam Veterans were surveyed to examine associations between combat exposure, psychological impact of war service (PTSD), marital and parental satisfaction, and family communication. Results showed direct negative association between combat exposure and psychological impact of war service and a direct negative association between psychological impact of war service on family satisfaction and functioning.

Key Findings:

- Veterans who had more combat exposure and experience with abusive violence were more likely to score higher on the PTSD intrusion subscale and the PTSD avoidance subscale.
- Veterans who had higher global perceptions of distress (a subscale of the PTSD scale) reported lower levels of couple communication skills.
- Veterans who reported higher levels of intrusion and avoidance on the PTSD subscales also reported lower levels of marital and parental satisfaction and couple communication skills.

Implications for Programs:

- Programs could offer supportive classes that address the impact of combat exposure and the psychological impact of war service on family satisfaction and functioning.
- Programs could support family members of Veterans in identifying appropriate community and government resources and assist in accessing those resources.
- Programs could offer classes to help couples improve their communication skills.

Implications for Policies:

- Policies could allocate funding to provide services to address the psychological impact of war service and family functioning for Veterans and their families.
- Policies could recommend that families are offered counseling or other services post-war service to support marital relationships and parenting.
- Policies could recommend funding for family-based social activities to enhance family functioning among those with a Veteran with PTSD.

Avenues for Future Research:

- Future research could include reports from multiple members of the family system, such as spouses and children.
- Future research could collect additional data using methods other than self-report questionnaires, such as interviews or observations.
- Future research could use a longitudinal design to give a more accurate depiction of family functioning across time.

Prepared by the Military REACH Team.

For additional information, please visit reachmilitaryfamilies.umn.edu

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Background Information

Methodology:

- Participants were randomly selected from submissions to the newsletter of a national organization of Vietnam Veterans.
- Participants completed scales of combat exposure, abusive violence, PTSD symptoms, marital and parenting satisfaction, family flexibility and cohesion, and couple communication skills.
- Correlations were used to test associations among variables.





Participants:

- 135 Vietnam Veterans participated in this study; 97% male and 3% female.
- Average age 45 years (SD = 3 years); 69% were married or cohabiting, 31% were divorced, widowed, separated, or single.
- Racial/ethnic composition: 90% Caucasian, 4% African American, 1% Hispanic, less than 1% Asian-American, less than 1% other.
- All branches represented in the sample: 60% Army, 21% Marine Corps, 11% Navy, 5% Air Force, 2% Coast Guard.

Limitations:

- The data are cross-sectional, and therefore causality cannot be inferred.
- All data were retrospective and self-report which may introduce biases, particularly in recall of combat exposure.
- Only Veterans who were married or cohabiting were included in the analyses.

Assessing Research that Works

Research Design and Sample				Quality Rating:	
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	
The design of the study (e.g., research plan, sample, recruitment) used to address the research question was....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Research Methods				Quality Rating:	
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	
The research methods (e.g., measurement, analysis) used to answer the research question were...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Limitations				Quality Rating:	
	Excellent Minor Limitations (★★★)	Appropriate Few Limitations (★★★)	Limited Several Limitations (★★★)	Questionable Many/Severe Limitations (★★★)	
The limitations of this study are...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Implications				Quality Rating:	
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	
The implications of this research to programs, policies and the field, stated by the authors, are...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable because authors do not discuss implications					
Overall Quality Rating					