

# Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:  
Civilian

## Health Problems of Partner Violence Victims

Hines, D. A., & Douglas, E. M. (2015). Health problems of partner violence victims. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 48(2), 136-144. doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2014.08.022

**SUMMARY:** Both men and women can be victims of partner violence; however, most research has focused on women, and less is known about the health problems of male partner violence victims. This study compared a sample of 611 male partner violence victims who sought help with a population-based sample of 1,601 men regarding their health problems. Results revealed that male partner violence victimization may threaten men's health.

### KEY FINDINGS:

- Compared to the population-based sample, the help-seeking sample had significantly more health problems (e.g., high blood pressure, sexually transmitted disease, asthma) and they were also more likely to abuse prescription medications.
- Compared to the population-based sample, the help-seeking sample was 15 times more likely to have posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms and were two times more prone to depression.
- There were no significant differences between the help-seeking and population-based groups in alcohol and illicit drug use.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS:

Military professionals could:

- Help intimate partner violence victims to identify appropriate resources to keep themselves safe and seek long-term support services
- Attend training about partner violence to enhance their ability to provide support to partner violence victims

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Offer support groups for male Service members and military spouses who were victims of intimate partner violence
- Provide marriage education workshops for military families that aim to reduce marital conflicts and improve communication skills

### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Raise awareness on military bases regarding the prevalence of male victims in intimate partner violence and the detrimental effects of it on men's health
- Encourage the development of programs that prevent intimate partner violence in military families

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## METHODS

- The help-seeking sample was recruited by posting advertisements on men's health, male intimate partner violence, and divorced men's issues agencies' websites; to be eligible for the study, men had to have been involved in a current or past intimate relationship with a woman and suffered from a physical assault from their female partner. The population-based sample was provided by a survey research firm.
- Measures that were used for the study assessed participants' intimate partner violence experiences, mental health (PTSD, depression), physical health, substance abuse, child maltreatment experiences, and emotional support.
- Data were analyzed to examine the differences between the help-seeking sample and the population-based sample in the measures.

## PARTICIPANTS

- Participants were 611 men who sought help for their victimization of partner violence and 1,601 population-based sample of men.
- The average age of the help-seekers was 43.89 years (SD = 9.18). Most of the help-seekers were White (75%), followed by Black (4%), Latino (5%), Asian American (4%), Native American (3%), and other (9%).
- The average age of the population-based sample was 41.77 years (SD = 11.35). Most of the population-based sample were White (76%), followed by Black (10%), Latino (11%), Asian American (2%), and Native American (1%).

## LIMITATIONS

- The study was only based on self-report data, so the results may be subject to memory bias and social-desirability bias.
- Some participants suffered from intimate partner violence many years ago whereas others' victimization was more recent; however, the study did not control for the influence of the recency of the violence.
- The study focused on male partner violence victims who sought help; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to men who suffered from partner violence but did not seek help.

## AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Use both self-report and objective data (e.g., hospital records) so that the results of the study are more reliable
- Recruit both intimate partner violence victims who sought help and those who did not seek help to increase the generalizability of the study
- Examine whether intimate partner violence victimization causes different risks to men and women

## ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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