

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Civilian

Impact of Teen Depression on Academic, Social, and Physical Functioning

Jaycox, L. H., Stein, B. D., Paddock, S., Miles, J. N. V., Chandra, A., Meredith, L. S., ... Burnam, M. A. (2009). Impact of teen depression on academic, social, and physical functioning. *Pediatrics*, 124(4), e596-e605. doi:10.1542/peds.2008-3348

SUMMARY: Self-reported survey data of depressed and non-depressed teens were utilized to examine the impact of teen depression on functioning within peer, family, school, and physical domains. In addition, the impact of teen depression on parents' perceived strain and burden was also examined. Results indicate that teen depression negatively affected both teen and family functioning.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Depressed teens reported significantly more impairment in nearly all domains (e.g., academic, peer, family functioning, and physical health) and more days of impairment, compared to the non-depressed teens.
- Compared to non-depressed teens, depressed teens reporting more anxiety, inattention/hyperactivity, aggression, substance use, and posttraumatic stress symptoms.
- Longitudinal analyses showed that depression affected subsequent teen functioning and parent strain.
- Parents of depressed teens reported reductions in teens' social and family relationships and greater strain on the family.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS:

Military professionals could:

- Facilitate support groups for military families of children coping with mental health issues
- Encourage collaboration between DoD and community-based services that work with military families coping with depression to provide comprehensive and seamless care

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Disseminate information regarding identifying and treating teen depression
- Offer workshops to military families regarding the comorbidity of mental health issues

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue to support programs that provide screening and access to evidence-based care to prevent short and longer-term costs of teen depression
- Educate service providers regarding the impact teen depression can have on military family functioning

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METHODS

- Depressed and non-depressed teens and their parents were recruited from 11 primary care offices in Los Angeles and Washington D.C.
- Participants completed a structure telephone interview survey to assess depression; depressed teens were those who met the criteria for a depressive episode for two or more weeks in the previous six months and who reported three or more depressive symptoms in the previous two weeks.
- Participants completed a baseline assessment one week following the depression assessment and a follow-up interview 6-months post-baseline.

PARTICIPANTS

- Participants included 368 (184 depressed, 184 non-depressed) teens and their parents (n = 339).
- The majority of teen were female (78%), Latino (49%), and between the ages of 13 and 18 years (M = 15).
- Demographic information for parents was not provided.

LIMITATIONS

- Participants who completed the study may have been functioning at higher levels than those who choose not to participant, which could affected the outcome variables.
- The use of self-report data means that data may be biased, with parents and children trying to respond in the “best” way.
- Participants included only civilian teens and parents and may not be accurately reflect the experience of military teens and parents.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Explore how teen depression impacts military family functioning
- Examine the effectiveness of military programs aimed at helping families cope with mental health issues
- Investigate how comorbid mental health issues influence depression and teen well-being

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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