

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Multiple
Branches

Predicting Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Violence Among Post-9/11 College Student Veterans

Klaw, E. L., Demers, A. L., & Da Silva, N. (2014). Predicting risk factors for intimate partner violence among post-9/11 college student veterans. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 31*(4), 572-597. doi:10.1177/0886260514556102

SUMMARY: Understanding risk factors for intimate partner and domestic violence among military families is an important area of research. Examination of risk factors (e.g., psychological distress, anger) and negative attitudes and beliefs (e.g., myths about domestic violence) suggested some risk factors and certain negative attitudes and beliefs are linked.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Veterans' psychological distress was positively associated with their reports of anger, low levels of social support, and psychological aggressiveness (e.g., insults) towards romantic partner.
- Participants' beliefs in domestic violence myths (e.g., believing if a person stays in a violent relationship they are at fault for the violence) and reports of anger were positively related to "hypermasculine" attitudes (e.g., "I fight to win").
- Veterans' use of negotiation tactics during conflict was negatively associated with psychological distress and positively associated with alcohol use.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Develop education materials to teach Service members and their families about risk factors for intimate partner violence
- Host peer support groups for Service members who experience psychological distress and want to learn better ways to cope with their distress
- Provide classes that teach military families about domestic violence to help reduce myths and inaccurate information about the nature and effects of domestic violence

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Recommend professionals who work with military families participate in trainings on the relationships between domestic violence and well-being
- Support programs for Service members and their partners about healthy relationships and positive coping strategies to manage conflicts
- Encourage collaboration among DoD programs and community-based programs to offer continuity of services for Service members and families who experience domestic violence

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METHODS

- Veterans who attended state and community colleges in California were recruited via flyers, emails, and online advertisement postings.
- Participants completed online surveys about psychological distress, alcohol and illicit drug use, attitudes about masculinity, domestic violence, conflict tactics, and relationship satisfaction.
- Statistical analyses were conducted to examine potential links among the study variables.

PARTICIPANTS

- Participants included 131 male Service members who represented Army (39%), Marines (23%), Navy (20%), Air Force (14%), and Coast Guard (4%) service branches.
- Average age of participants was 29.3 years ($SD=5.96$ years). No data were provided on the race or ethnicity of participants.
- In the sample, 71% of participants reported they had been deployed overseas more than once and 77% of the sample were deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan.

LIMITATIONS

- This was a cross-sectional study which means no conclusions can be determined regarding if certain attitudes and beliefs lead to incidences of intimate partner or domestic violence.
- The authors used the phrases “intimate partner violence” and “domestic violence” interchangeably in the study, although the two terms can represent two different constructs.
- There were no data provided on the race and ethnicity of the participants, which limits the ability to understand the impact of race or ethnicity on the interpretation of the findings.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Conduct studies that evaluate the effectiveness of family interventions to prevent or reduce incidences of domestic violence among Service members and their families
- Develop a longitudinal research study to explore the relationships between incidences of domestic violence and children’s outcomes into adulthood
- Examine relationships among personality traits, attitudes, and opinions among female Service members and incidences of domestic violence

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