

# Putting Research to Work for Military Families



**Focus:**  
Multiple  
Branches

## Reporting for Double Duty: A Dyadic Perspective of the Biopsychosocial Health of Dual Military Air Force Couples

Lacks, M., Lamson, A., Lewis, M., White, M., & Russoniello, C. (2015). Reporting for double duty: A dyadic perspective of the biopsychosocial health of dual military Air Force couples. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 37(3), 302-315.  
doi:10.1007/s10591-015-9341-y

**SUMMARY:** Dual military couples were recruited from a military family medicine clinic and completed questionnaires about relationship functioning. Levels of physiological stress were also assessed in both partners. Although the number of deployments did not affect reported marital satisfaction or quality, higher military rank in the wives was related to poorer marital functioning.

### KEY FINDINGS:

- No significant relationships emerged between number of deployments or marital satisfaction, quality, or adjustment.
- Higher rank in the female partner was related to lower marital satisfaction (husband report) and lower marital adjustment (wife report).
- Higher levels of physiological stress in wives were predicted by lower marital satisfaction and lower marital adjustment
- Levels of physiological stress in husbands were predicted by the number of his deployments.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Create specific curricula for dual military couples, offering supports in managing the challenges associated with this lifestyle
- Develop and offer support programs for children of dual military parents to assist them with negotiating their parents' work duties and busy schedules
- Incorporate information in relationship enrichment activities that promote effective means of managing stress

### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Recommend the development of supports for dual military couples to assist them in managing major life changes such as deployments and changing duty stations
- Encourage consideration of the timing of deployment assignments for dual military partners who are raising small children
- Consider work scheduling for dual military couples, striving to afford partners to have overlapping vacation time they can spend with their families

This product is the result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with The University of Minnesota.



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## METHODS

- Couples were recruited when they attended an appointment at a base family medicine clinic.
- Couples completed questionnaires about military and deployment history, marital satisfaction, marital quality, and marital adjustment.
- Heart rate variability was also assessed with each partner via a fingertip pulse oximeter.

## PARTICIPANTS

- Dual military Air Force couples (N = 20) participated.
- Forty-seven percent of partners were White; 53% of husbands and 35% of wives were African American.
- The average age of husbands was 35.4 years (SD = 8.1) and 35.0 years (SD = 8.7) for wives.

## LIMITATIONS

- The study had a small number of dual military couples drawn from one military clinic which limits the ability to generalize findings.
- Data were cross sectional which prevents the ability to draw causal conclusions.
- Some variables that may have been relevant (e.g., combat exposure, lengths of deployments) were not assessed.

## AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Conduct qualitative studies to provide greater context for the challenges associated with dual military family life
- Replicate this study with a larger, more heterogeneous group of military couples from a broader catchment area
- Examine the impact of dual military couples on parenting and child well-being

## ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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