

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Army

Domestic Violence and Deployment in US Army Soldiers

McCarroll, J. E., Ursano, R. J., Newby, J. H., Liu, X., Fullerton, C. S., Norwood, A. E., & Osuch, E. A. (2003). Domestic violence and deployment in US army soldiers. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 191(1), 3-9.
doi:10.1097/00005053-200301000-00002

SUMMARY: It is important to study the relationship between deployment and domestic violence. By administering anonymous surveys to both deployed and non-deployed male Service members, the study examined the relationship between deployment and domestic violence. Results revealed no direct association between deployment and domestic violence, but indicated other risk factors that are related to domestic violence in military families.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Deployment was not related to domestic violence three to four months post-deployment.
- Younger Soldiers were more likely to perpetrate domestic violence than their older counterparts.
- Soldiers with a history of pre-deployment domestic violence were four to five times more likely to have postdeployment domestic violence than Soldiers without such history.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Offer support groups for Service members and military spouses who suffer from domestic violence
- Design workshops for Service members regarding how to prevent domestic violence and increase marital satisfaction
- Work closely with Service members post deployment, especially the ones with a history of domestic violence

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Recommend anti-stigma campaigns to encourage military spouses to discuss domestic violence
- Continue to support family education programs that aim to prevent domestic violence in military families
- Recommend education for all professionals working with military families about how to support military family members who are suffering from domestic violence

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.



Putting Research to Work for Military Families



METHODS

- Participants were recruited from a large Army unit, and some of them were deployed to Bosnia for six months.
- All participants answered anonymous surveys about incidents of domestic violence toward their female spouses before and three to four months after deployment.
- Data were analyzed to examine whether deployment affected the likelihood of domestic violence.

PARTICIPANTS

- Participants were 1,025 married male Soldiers; 313 of them were deployed to Bosnia from September 1998 to April 1999 (average length = 187 days), and 712 of them were not deployed during that period.
- The average age of the participants was 28 years, and they had been married between five and six years.
- Nearly 90% of the sample was enlisted, and the majority of the sample were White (57%), followed by Black (23%), Latino (14%), and other (6%).

LIMITATIONS

- Female soldiers were not included in the sample, therefore the results are not applicable to military families with female Service members.
- The study only examined male Soldiers as perpetrators of domestic violence, so it limits the ability to generalize to male soldiers who are victims of domestic violence.
- The post-deployment period was limited to three to four month post-return (the “honey moon” period), so it is hard to determine whether domestic violence increases at a later time.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Recruit both male and female Service members to examine gender differences in post-deployment domestic violence
- Investigate the rate of domestic violence for brief and extended time intervals during the post-deployment period
- Compare the risk factors for moderate or severe domestic violence

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



For more information about the Assessing Research that Works rating scale visit:
<https://reachmilitaryfamilies.umn.edu/content/assessing-research-that-works>