

# Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:  
Navy

## Perpetration of Severe Intimate Partner Violence: Premilitary and Second Year of Service Rates.

Merrill, L. L., Crouch, J. L., Thomsen, C. J., Guimond, J., & Milner, J. S. (2005). Perpetration of severe intimate partner violence: Premilitary and second year of service rates *Military Medicine*, 170(8), 705-09.

**SUMMARY:** Severe intimate partner violence (SIPV) perpetration among female and male Navy personnel during the year before enlistment and the second year of service was examined. A longitudinal design was implemented in which 542 female and 421 male Navy personnel completed four assessments over a period of two years. Overall more reported SIPV perpetration after two years of service than during the year before service (14%, compared with a pre-military rate of 11%).

### KEY FINDINGS:

- Pre-military SIPV perpetration rates were significantly higher for women (20%) than for men (4%).
- Across the two year study, SIPV perpetration increased among men (from 4% to 16%) and decreased among women (from 20% to 12%).
- Respondents who were female, younger, and racial/ethnic minorities reported higher rates of pre-military SIPV perpetration.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Continue to provide opportunities for Service members and their families that focus on the prevention of SIPV during the transition into the military
- Disseminate information regarding possible warning signs of SIPV to professionals working with young Service members and their partners
- Develop online modules that focus on effective relationship building strategies for newly recruited Service members and their partners

### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Promote the development of structured workshops for newly recruited Service members and their partners on healthy relationships
- Encourage awareness among professionals working with new military recruits and their partners on the importance of developing programming and support for SIPV victims
- Build awareness across military branches around the importance of supporting and promoting health and wellness among Service members and new recruits

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## METHODS

- Participants were recruited through a Navy training center in Illinois.
- Participants completed the Conflict Tactics Scale during recruitment, six months, one, and two years later.
- Statistical analysis examined the differences in SIPV perpetration at different time points among Navy recruits.

## PARTICIPANTS

- The initial sample included 2,573 women and 2,925 men; however, only 963 participants (542 women and 421 men) completed the initial assessment as well as the 2-year follow-up assessments.
- The majority of participants (87%) had a high school degree or the equivalent, most (89%) were single and under the age of 23 years old (89%).
- The majority of participants were White (57%), 19% were Black, 13% were Latino, and 11% were other.

## LIMITATIONS

- The loss of participants from the initial assessment to the last assessment may represent a selection bias.
- The study relied on self-reported SIPV perpetration, which could have misrepresented the actual number and severity of incidents.
- Participants were recruited from one location in the U.S. and were from one age demographic, which could limit generalizability to other regions and ages of Service members.

## AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Investigate the differences in Service member and civilian populations with regards to changes in patterns and rates of SIPV across time
- Examine subgroups of individuals (e.g., those who first initiate SIPV during service, those who continue pre-military patterns of SIPV, and those who cease to perpetrate SIPV during service) to gain insights into the factors that influence changes in patterns of SIPV perpetration
- Explore the proximal and causal factors associated with starting, continuing, and stopping SIPV perpetration during service in the Navy

## 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>