

Positive and Negative Consequences of a Military Deployment

Newby, J. H., McCarroll, J. E., Ursano, R. J., Fan, Z., Shigemura, J., Tucker-Harris, Y. (2005). Positive and negative consequences of a military deployment. *Military Medicine*, 170, 815-819.



951 Active Duty U.S. Army Soldiers completed surveys in which they described positive and negative consequences of their deployment to Bosnia. 77% of Soldiers reported some positive consequences of deployment, 63% described negative consequences of deployment, and 47% reported both positive and negative consequences of deployment.

Key Findings:

- 77% of Soldiers reported positive consequences of deployment, 63% reported negative consequences, and 47% reported both positive and negative consequences.
- Married Soldiers were more likely to report negative consequences of deployment than single Soldiers.
- Single Soldiers were more likely to report positive consequences of deployment than married Soldiers.
- Positive consequences of deployment included: made additional money (17%), self-improvement (11%), lots of time to think (11%), improved romantic relationship (6%), helped Bosnian people (5%), experienced a new culture (5%), and recognized benefits of living in the U.S. (5%).
- Negative consequences of deployment included: disappointed with chain of command (14%), missed family or important events (11%), damaged romantic relationship (9%), personal change for worse (5%), no reason for mission (3%), and mismanaged money (3%).

Implications for Programs:

- Programs could enhance their existing curricula from a problem- or deficit-focus to including concepts of resiliency and positive change that some Service members experience.
- Programs could provide classes addressing money management for Service members and spouses.

Implications for Policies:

- Policies could be modified to allow for additional communication between deployed Service members and their families at home, when possible.
- Policies that guide the Department of Defense's recruiting and retention processes could emphasize some of the positive sentiments expressed by participants herein (e.g., additional income, sense of purpose in helping others, experience of new cultures).

Avenues for Future Research:

- Future research could provide a more systematic quantitative measurement of positive and negative effects of deployment. Research could also assess if and how these effects change over time.
- Future studies could examine areas of intervention that could minimize negative consequences and build upon positive consequences of deployment.

Background Information

Methodology:

- U.S. Soldiers who had been deployed to a peacekeeping mission in Bosnia completed surveys immediately after returning home.
- Participants were asked to respond “yes” or “no” to the question as to whether anything positive or anything negative had come from their deployment. Those who responded in the affirmative were asked to provide comments about their experiences.
- Thematic categories of positive and negative effects of deployment were identified.





Participants:

- 951 Active Duty Soldiers completed surveys.
- The majority was married (55%), male (92%), and Caucasian (56%)
- 56% had E1-E4 rank, and 49% reported having some college education

Limitations:

- The single time-point of the study does not allow for long-term evaluation of positive and negative consequences post-deployment.
- Although some participant comments were ambiguous or neutral, all participant were labeled as “positive” or “negative” by researchers.

Assessing Research that Works

Research Design and Sample				Quality Rating:	
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	
The design of the study (e.g., research plan, sample, recruitment) used to address the research question was....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Research Methods				Quality Rating:	
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	
The research methods (e.g., measurement, analysis) used to answer the research question were...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Limitations				Quality Rating:	
	Excellent Minor Limitations (★★★)	Appropriate Few Limitations (★★★)	Limited Several Limitations (★★★)	Questionable Many/Severe Limitations (★★★)	
The limitations of this study are...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Implications				Quality Rating:	
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	
The implications of this research to programs, policies and the field, stated by the authors, are...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable because authors do not discuss implications					
Overall Quality Rating					