

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Army

Postdeployment Domestic Violence by US Army Soldiers

Newby, J. H., Ursano, R. J., McCarroll, J. E., Liu, X., Fullerton, C. S., & Norwood, A. E. (2005). Postdeployment domestic violence by US Army soldiers. *Military Medicine*, 170(8), 643-647. doi:10.7205/MILMED.170.8.643

SUMMARY: Deployments can have significant effects on levels of stress and family dynamics. Researchers analyzed the relationship between deployment and domestic violence in this study. Data indicated age was related to the likelihood of wives experiencing domestic violence, but deployment was not.

KEY FINDINGS:

- The likelihood of domestic violence did not increase during the post-deployment period.
- Young women who had experienced domestic violence in their lifetime were more likely to experience abuse post-deployment than older women with no previous domestic violence incidents.
- The main predictor of military wives experiencing domestic violence post-deployment was occurrences of domestic violence pre-deployment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Offer workshops for couples with a history of domestic violence to help them develop effective communication skills
- Develop classes that inform military wives of risk factors for violence and the resources available to help them
- Provide information regarding physical safety and general well-being to military wives with previous incidents of domestic violence

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Recommend regular screenings for domestic violence in Service members' families
- Encourage education for professionals who work with military families regarding factors that increase the risk of domestic violence
- Continue to support assessment of the prevalence of domestic violence in the military over time, especially monitoring subgroups who are at higher risk

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METHODS

- Researchers sent surveys to wives of Soldiers at a large U.S. Army post; there was a response rate of 30%.
- Information regarding incidents of domestic violence was collected from wives of Service members who were deployed and wives of Service members that did not deploy during that same timeframe.
- To determine abuse risk factors, the level of violence at pre-deployment was compared to the level of violence at post-deployment.

PARTICIPANTS

- Average age of women whose Army husbands were deployed (N = 368) was 31.8 years old (SD = 7) and women whose husbands did not deploy (N = 528) was 30.4 years old (SD = 6.7).
- Average deployment time for Army husbands was six months, with a 10 month post-deployment at the time of the study.

LIMITATIONS

- The number of deployments, number of children, and number of years together were not taken into account which may have varying effects on the results.
- The data were collected only after a singular deployment therefore the findings are not appropriate to compare to the risk of domestic violence throughout varying stages of the deployment cycle.
- The limited response rate may mean the sample is not representative of all wives experiencing domestic violence as those who experience domestic violence may be less likely to respond to such a survey.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Investigate Service members in a longitudinal study to determine how the number of deployments affects cumulative risk for domestic violence
- Conduct within-group comparisons for wives in the highest-risk age group to determine what other factors may be increasing risk of domestic violence
- Explore what other variables are risk-factors for domestic violence for Army wives

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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