



Effects of Work-Related Absences on Families: Evidence from the Gulf War

Angrist, J. D. & Johnson, J. H. (2000). *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 54, 41-58.

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/ilrreview/articles.html>



The purpose of this study was to estimate the effect of work-related separations on military families. Specifically, the authors estimate the effect of Gulf War deployment on divorce rates, spousal employment, and children's disability rates (physical, emotional, or intellectual handicap).

Key Findings:

- Deployment of female Service members increased the likelihood of divorce; however, the deployment of male Service members had no impact on marital dissolution. Deployment of male Service members was associated with Service member's wives working less. However, deployment of female Service members was not associated with husbands' labor market behavior (e.g., employment).
- Time deployed reduced the employment rates of wives of male soldiers.
- There was no evidence of an increase in disabilities in the children of Service members as a result of deployment.

Implications for Programs:

- Programs could adopt curriculum that provides knowledge of services to Service member's wives in the anticipation of deployment affecting their work schedule. This may include resources addressing childcare, workplace family-leave policies etc.
- Programs could adopt curriculum that provides specific support and coping skills targeted to predictors of marital dissolution for husbands of military wives who are deployed.

Implications for Policies:

- Policies should be promoted that provide husbands of deployed military wives access to additional counseling or other support services during deployment.
- Policies to strengthen the family readiness supports, including child care options, for families of Service members during deployment may mediate the reduced employment rates experienced by military families (and wives specifically).

Avenues for Future Research:

- Future research should examine rates of child adjustment using more detailed measures than are included in the Survey of Officers and Enlisted Personnel (SOEP).
- Future research should examine why rates of divorce are higher for wives that deploy compared to husbands.
- Additional research on dual military families and divorce rates is needed in order to get a complete picture of the impact of deployment on marital dissolution.

Prepared by Military REACH Team.

For additional information, please visit <http://reachmilitaryfamilies.arizona.edu>



Background Information

Methodology:

- The 1992 Survey of Officers and Enlisted Personnel (SOEP) was used in this study. The overall response rate for this survey was 62% representing 59,930 Service members. Weighting techniques were used in order to make generalizations to the population. Regression analyses were used to analyze the data.
- This article focuses on military families from all branches.

Participants:

- The sample was 89% male, 28% non-white, on average the participants were 29 years of age ($SD = 7.35$), and 15% of the sample were officers.

Limitations:

- This study may be limited as a result of selection bias. Only 62% of Service members responded to the survey, thus participating and non-participating Service members may differ in important ways.
- The SOEP is not specifically designed to gather information about children and the disability questions are the only available outcome data on children. The child disability measure may not capture the range of problems children could experience due to deployment

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implications	Quality Rating: N/A			
	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
☑ Not applicable because authors do not discuss implications				
Overall Quality Rating				
★★★☆☆				

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