



## Veteran Status and Marital Aggression: Does Military Service Make a Difference?

Bradley, C. (2007). *Journal of Family Violence*, 22, 197–209. DOI 10.1007/s10896-007-9072-4  
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/y871730718263175/>



*This study evaluated whether or not veteran status predicts an individual's tendency to use domestic violence as a tactic to resolve marital discord (note: the sample was taken in 1988 and does not represent veterans from OIF or OEF).*

### Key Findings:

- Eighty-eight percent of all couples (both veteran and non-veteran) reported no intimate violence over the past year, 10% engaged in common couple violence where at least one of the partners stated that an argument had become physically violent, and 3% reported at least one incidence of intensive male violence.
- Veteran status did *not* increase the likelihood of domestic violence. Involvement in combat did *not* increase the likelihood of domestic violence.
- The presence of stress such as high debt, unemployment, working two jobs, and problems with drugs/alcohol in a relationship *did* increase the likelihood of domestic violence.
- Older men, older women, men with more education, and men with higher occupational prestige scores all had lower odds of engaging in relationship violence. However, although these odds were statistically significant, the effect sizes were small.
- Cohabiting couples were more likely to engage in all forms of domestic violence, with the odds of an episode of intense male violence (vs. no violence) being 254% higher among cohabitators.

### Implications for Programs:

- Existing programs could aggressively and proactively reach out to serve cohabitators.
- Programs could provide education and professional development to staff about the difficulties military couples face.

### Implications for Policies:

- There is a significant need for service providers who have knowledge of the unique needs of military personnel and their families. Special attention and effort should be given to the recruitment, specialized training, and retention of providers serving this population.

### Avenues for Future Research:

- These findings should be replicated in a more recent and diverse sample (e.g., ethnicity, Service member rank, and service branch) and specifically in relation to deployment (versus simple veteran status).
- Future research might investigate whether or not prior service in the armed forces impacts other areas of a veteran's intimate relationships such as dating violence or marital sexual assault.

Prepared by Military REACH Team.

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



## Background Information

### Methodology:

- The authors used cross-sectional data came from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) Wave 1 dataset, which was collected over a 14-month period that ended in the spring of 1988. The sample included 5,418 married or cohabitating heterosexual couples where 36% (n = 1,950) of the men in the sample were veterans, 1% (n = 54) of women had served in the armed forces, and 13% (n = 704) of the veterans had some form of combat exposure during their time in uniform. A series of regression models (multinomial logit models) were used to obtain results.
- This study used a dataset where 36% of participants were veterans to focus on combat veterans and their intimate partners.

### Participants:

- 5,418 married or cohabitating heterosexual couples between the ages of 16 and 91 (Male:  $M = 44$  years of age,  $SD = 15$  years; Female:  $M = 41$  years of age,  $SD = 15$  years) from across the United States were included in this study.
- Ethnic composition: 81% white/Caucasian and 19% minority status/other.

### Limitations:

- Given the extensive research that demonstrates the negative impact of combat exposure on domestic violence, the lack of significant findings in the current study may lie in the relatively small number of male combat veterans in the sample, or the date when the data was collected (prior to 1988, does not include veterans from OEI or OEF).
- The variables measuring domestic violence are not robust; hence, the more extreme forms of intimate violence are likely underrepresented in the NSFH dataset.
- One of the theories used to set the stage for the research question (but later dismissed in light of the results) may be an over-simplified extension of cultural-spillover theory and should be interpreted with care.

## 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Implications					Quality Rating:
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	N/A
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"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable because authors do not discuss implications					
Overall Quality Rating					★☆☆

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