

The Moderating Effect of Parenthood in the Relationship Between Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms and Lateral Preference in Israeli Combat Troops

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147 male Israeli Defense Forces reserve combat personnel participated in a study examining the relationship between PTSD and lateral preference (handedness) in those with and without children. The relationship between PTSD symptoms and lateral preference differed between those with and without children. Military personnel who were not parents had higher PTSD scores than those with children.

Key Findings:

- There were no significant differences in combat exposure, lateral preference, military experiences, or length of combat between combat personnel with and without children.
- Participants without children had significantly higher PTSD scores than those with children.
- For those with children, the three diagnostic components of PTSD (intrusiveness, avoidance, and arousal) explained 72% of the variance in lateral preference.
- For those without children, the three diagnostic components of PTSD (intrusiveness, avoidance, arousal) explained 4% of the variance in lateral preference.
- Intrusiveness significantly predicted lateral preference in both parents and nonparents.

Implications for Programs:

- Programs could survey parents in their programs to assess desired parenting services and supports.
- Programs could compile a list of local PTSD treatment resources for Service members and their families.
- Programs could offer classes for family members that describe signs and symptoms of PTSD.

Implications for Policies:

- Policies could continue to allocate funding for childcare for Service members who have children.
- Policies could continue to offer a range of PTSD treatment options for military personnel who have experienced trauma.
- Policies could provide professional development for family service workers in recognizing the symptoms of PTSD.

Avenues for Future Research:

- Future research could explore potential reasons for the differences in parents and non-parents in PTSD symptoms.
- Additional studies could assess challenges faced by parents with PTSD.
- Future research could follow parents with PTSD prospectively to assess changing experiences and needs over time.



Background Information

Methodology:

- Reserve combat units in Israel were given questionnaires, and 66% participated.
- Participants completed demographic questions and measures of handedness, military service, and PTSD.
- T-tests compared those with and without children on several of the measures.
- Multiple linear regression examined components of PTSD and lateral preference among participants with and without children.

Participants:

- 147 male Israeli defense personnel.
- Average age = 27.45 years (SD=3.67 years).
- 62% served in infantry units, 19% in the Armored Corps.
- 69% were single, 30% married (of whom 64% had children).
- 86% were born in Israel.

Limitations:

- With a 66% response rate, it is unknown how participants may have differed from those who chose not to participate in the study.
- The sample consisted of only men, and results may not generalize to women.
- The meaning of the relationship between handedness and PTSD is unknown.

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:
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:
The limitations of this study are...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	★★★★☆
Implications					Quality Rating:
The implications of this research to programs, policies and the field, stated by the authors, are...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	★★★★☆
<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable because authors do not discuss implications					
Overall Quality Rating					★★★★☆