

## The Effects of Peer Group Climate on Intimate Partner Violence among Married Male U.S. Army Soldiers

Rosen, L. N., Kaminski, R. J., Parmley, A. M., Knudson, K. H., & Fancher, P. (2003). The effects of peer group climate on intimate partner violence among married male U.S. Army soldiers. *Violence Against Women*, 9, 1045-1071. doi 10.1177/1077801203255504



*This research examined the relation between Soldier personal characteristics and peer-group factors with intimate partner violence. Personal factors included depression, marital adjustment, and alcohol problems. Peer group factors included peer bonding among Soldiers within a unit, confidence in unit leadership, and group climate (e.g., spousal support and level of hyper-masculinity among Soldiers).*

### Key Findings:

- Individual-level predictor variables significantly associated with intimate partner violence included race, symptoms of depression, poor marital adjustment, alcohol problems, and a history of childhood abuse.
- Group-level predictor variables significantly associated with intimate partner violence included lower leadership support, a culture of hyper-masculinity, and lower support for spouses.
- Soldiers' own contribution to group disrespect (e.g. rude, aggressive behavior; pornography consumption; sexualized discussion; encouraging group drinking behavior) was associated with both increased perpetration of intimate partner violence.

### Implications for Programs:

- Programs could provide gender sensitivity training to help promote respectful group culture for all Service members and their families.
- Programs could provide classes for Service members and families about preventing and recognizing domestic violence, arming participants with military and community-based resources.

### Implications for Policies:

- Policies could be developed that create a small group of Soldiers within a company who are designated to promote positive unit culture by discouraging misogyny and other undesirable behavior.
- Policies could be developed that encourage sobriety. For example, substance-free weekend activities could be developed for Soldiers and attendance rewarded with desirable prizes.

### Avenues for Future Research:

- Additional research could examine if the presence and proportion of women within a unit influences unit-level characteristics.
- Additional research is needed to clarify the association between Soldiers' confidence in unit leadership and intimate partner violence.

## Background Information

### Methodology:

- Battalion and family life chaplains distributed surveys at an Alaskan post.
- Survey measures in this study included the Walter Reed Army Institute for Research (WRAIR) Horizontal (bonding within unit) and Vertical (confidence in leadership) Cohesion Scales, a modified Army-Family Interface Scale (spouse support), the Marital subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (marital adjustment), the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (i.e. CES-D), the Short Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test, and the Negative Masculinity Scale from the Extended Personal Attributes Questionnaire.
- Intimate Partner Violence was measured using the Conflict Tactics Scale.





### Participants:

- Participants were 1,411 soldiers from 27 companies (58% of all non-deployed personnel at the Alaskan post at the time).
- Analysis centered on a subset of 713 married male Soldiers.
- The average age of participants was 26 years; 60% were White, 21% African American, 6% White Hispanic, 3% Black Hispanic, 1% Asian, 3% multiracial, and 6% other.
- The majority of the participants were enlisted. Officers were invited to participate but many declined, especially in the higher ranks, due to concerns about confidentiality of their information.

### Limitations:

- This study relies on self-reported intimate partner violence which may underestimate actual rates.
- Because data were collected exclusively from one Army fort, results may not generalize to other Army personnel or other military branches.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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:	
	Excellent (★★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★)	Questionable (★)		
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						