

# Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:  
Air Force

## Preventive Impacts of Reliable Family Maltreatment Criteria

Snarr, J. D., Heyman, R. E., Slep, A. M. S., & Malik, J. (2011). Preventive impacts of reliable family maltreatment criteria. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 79*(6), 826-833. doi:10.1037/a0025994

**SUMMARY:** Air Force child and spouse maltreatment reports were utilized to examine how the implementation of revisions to maltreatment criteria influenced overall rates of substantiation and one-year recidivism. The implementation of revised maltreatment criteria was found to influence both rates of substantiation and recidivism.

### KEY FINDINGS:

- The percentage of child (from 51% to 39%) and spouse (from 63% to 54%) maltreatment reports that were substantiated decreased after the revised system was implemented.
- Although the rates of founded reports for child and partner maltreatment decreased overall, there was some variability between bases; 35% of bases experienced an increased rate of founded incidents after the revised system was implemented.
- Child and spouse offenders with founded incident reports under the revised system were less likely to have a repeat offense, compared to those with founded incident reports under the old system.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Continue to provide support and service referrals to military families who may be at risk for spouse or child maltreatment
- Provide education to Service members and their partners regarding resiliency and healthy coping as a way to prevent maltreatment
- Continue to disseminate information to military personnel regarding reporting requirements for child and spouse maltreatment

### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue to support programs that aim to identify and prevent child and spouse maltreatment in military families
- Continue to support the implementation of the revised maltreatment criteria in all service branches
- Encourage collaboration among DoD and community-based programs that work with military families at-risk for family maltreatment

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## METHODS

- Family Advocacy Program (FAP) reports were obtained from the Air Force Family Advocacy System of Records (FASOR) Clinical Information System.
- Only FAP reports occurring within one year prior to the criteria changes and one year after the committee changes were utilized for this study.
- The rate of recidivism one year after the first offense was also explored to determine whether the revised process provided a deterrent to re-offending.

## PARTICIPANTS

- A total of 14,298 Air Force child and spouse maltreatment reports (7,549 child reports and 6,749 spouse reports) that occurred during the last year of the old FAP system and the first year following the implementation of the revised FAP system were included in the sample.
- Alleged offenders, despite military status, who were investigated by the Air Force FAP were included in the study sample.
- No demographic data were included.

## LIMITATIONS

- Rates of recidivism may not include Airmen who left military service following their initial offense and may not accurately capture rates of recidivism for all offenders.
- Archival data were used and therefore the authors made speculations regarding why the rates of substantiated reports decreased.
- This study only examined the implementation of the revised criteria within the Air Force, therefore results can not be generalized to other branches of the military.

## AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Continue to explore how the implementation of the revised system influences long-term rates of substantiation and recidivism
- Explore what contributed to the reduced rate of recidivism after the revised system was implemented
- Examine the effects of implementation of maltreatment criteria in other branches of the military

## ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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