

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Army

Self-Reported Stressors of National Guard Women Veterans Before and After Deployment: The Relevance of Interpersonal Relationship

Yan, G. W., McAndrew, L., D'Andrea, E. A., Lange, G., Santos, S. L., Engel, C. C., & Quigley, K. S. (2013). Self-reported stressors of National Guard women veterans before and after deployment: The relevance of interpersonal relationship. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 28(2), 549-555. doi:10.1007/s11606-012-2247-6

SUMMARY: Female National Guard and Reserve personnel completed qualitative surveys to examine the prevalence of stressors before and after deployment. Interpersonal stressors were most common across all data collection time points.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Six major stressor categories were identified for female Guard and Reserve personnel, including: interpersonal, deployment- and military-related, health concerns, death of a loved one, daily needs, and employment/school-related.
- Spanning all time points across the deployment cycle, interpersonal stressors were the most common.
- The prevalence of deployment- and military-related stressors decreased over time.
- The prevalence of daily needs, health, and employment/school concerns increased over time.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Offer supportive classes for female Service Members about coping with interpersonal stressors
- Collaborate with physical health care providers to develop seminars about the associations between interpersonal stressors and physical health
- Work with local community and religious groups to provide better access to resources for female Service Members

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Recommend incorporating specific screenings for interpersonal stressors for Service Members before and after deployment
- Encourage the development of training for Service Members about how to cope with stressors
- Recommend that family reintegration seminars incorporate training about stressors and how to access resources to cope with stressors

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METHODS

- This study is part of the HEROES projects, a prospective, longitudinal cohort study of pre- and post-deployment health.
- Participants were surveyed prior to an Iraq or Afghanistan deployment, immediately after return from deployment, three months after return, and one year after return.
- Participants responded to an open-ended question about the most important stressor experienced in the last year.

PARTICIPANTS

- Seventy-five Army National Guard and Reserve personnel deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan participated in this study.
- The majority of participants were White (67%), with an average age of 28 years (SD = 7.9 years).
- The majority of participants had not previously deployed (70%).

LIMITATIONS

- The sample was small and results may not generalize to all female National Guard and Reserve personnel.
- There was a large amount of attrition across data collection points, which could reduce validity of the results.
- Only female Army National Guard and Reserve personnel were included in the study; it is unknown how these results might generalize to male Army National Guard and Reserve personnel.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Use in-depth qualitative interviews to better understand the stressors experienced by female Service Members
- Examine how Service Members seek resources to help cope with stressors
- Explore other factors related to stressors, such as socioeconomic status and family structure

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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