

Study reveals health impacts on Defence families

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(Medical Xpress)—Partners of Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel deployed multiple times were as physically and mentally well as those who had fewer deployments, a University of Queensland study shows.

The first major study of its kind in [Australia](#) and one of the largest in the world involved more than 4,000 defence personnel, both current and ex-serving, and their partners was launched today by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon.

Chief Investigator, Dr Annabel McGuire, said the study was commissioned by the Department of Veterans' Affairs to investigate the physical, mental, and [family health](#) impacts of deployment to Timor-Leste on families.

"Results from our survey indicate that most [military families](#) are in good physical and [mental health](#)," Dr McGuire said.

"Partners who were well both physically and mentally coped better with the pressures placed on them by their partners' deployment.

"They reported that their families were functioning well, there was minimal conflict in their relationships, and that they had plenty of family and social support."

Family and community support was particularly important for protecting mental health.

"Not surprisingly, those who demonstrated lower social or family support, low family functioning, and high levels of conflict in their relationships reported they were struggling to cope with the pressures of deployment.

"Everyone's story is different but on average, partners of ADF personnel who had deployed multiple times were just as well physically and mentally as the partners who had experienced fewer deployments.

"While the Timor-Leste [Family](#) Study helped to confirm much of what was already suspected about defence families, we would like to understand more about the impacts of recent deployments to the Middle East.

"Further research relating to the [welfare](#) of defence families will be vital to help the Departments of Veterans' Affairs and Defence tailor services and programs which will support the partners and children of our military personnel into the future."

Provided by University of Queensland

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