

Increased prevalence of depression, PTSD and medical conditions among military personnel who experience trauma

May 7 2018, by Glenn O'neal

Service members who experience trauma, including sexual trauma, during their service are at increased risk of major depressive disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and chronic medical conditions, according to new research presented today at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association here. Adverse childhood experiences also increased risk of PTSD among female service members.

PTSD and depression are common psychiatric disorders in [military service members](#). Female military personnel are at high risk for exposure to military sexual trauma during their service; about 30 percent of woman veterans report being sexually assaulted during their service. Researchers from the University of Iowa looked at the associations of military sexual trauma, adverse childhood events and military deployment/combat experience with [major depressive disorder](#), PTSD and various medical conditions, including diabetes, fibromyalgia, fatigue or chronic pain.

The study involved 388 military personnel (201 male and 187 female) recruited through a study conducted at the Iowa City Veteran's Affairs Medical Center. Study participants took part in computer-assisted telephone interviews. A total of 63 participants had experienced either attempted or completed sexual assault, including 58 women (31 percent of the interviewed population).

Depression was significantly associated with history of military trauma and adverse childhood experiences for men and women. The study found a significant association between PTSD and a history of military sexual trauma, military trauma and adverse childhood experiences among females. However, among males, PTSD was only associated with military trauma. Based on a limited medical status assessment, the study found a significant increase in chronic health conditions among men with history of military trauma.

Provided by American Psychiatric Association

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