

# Higher optimism tied to lower odds of pain after deployment

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(HealthDay)—For U.S. soldiers, higher levels of optimism are associated

with lower odds of reporting new pain after deployment, according to a study published online Feb. 8 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Afton L. Hassett, Psy.D., from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and colleagues conducted a longitudinal cohort study involving 20,734 U.S. Army soldiers to examine the correlation between predeployment optimism and onset of new [pain](#) after deployment.

The researchers found that 37.3 percent of the soldiers reported pain in at least one new area of the body after deployment: 25.3, 23.1, and 12.1 percent reported new back pain, new joint pain, and new frequent headaches, respectively. Even after adjustment for demographic, military, and combat factors, each one-unit increase in optimism was correlated with significantly lower odds of reporting any new pain after deployment (odds ratio, 0.89). Compared with soldiers with high optimism, soldiers with low optimism had increased odds of reporting new pain in any of the three sites (odds ratio, 1.35). When comparing the moderate-optimism and low-optimism groups rather than the high-optimism and moderate-optimism groups, there was a larger increase in pain.

"Data from Army psychological assessments like the Global Assessment Tool could be used to identify soldiers with low levels of optimism who may benefit from programs geared toward enhancing optimism," the authors write. "These strategies could help diminish the consequences of pain, one of the most common and costly outcomes of deployment."

One author disclosed having a proprietary interest in Master Resilience Training, the backbone of the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program, and receiving related payments.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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