Understanding the Lived Experiences of Highly Mobile Military Adolescents in Search of Their Identity

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Background and Significance

Approximately 10% of the active duty military population have children ranging from early to late adolescents. Childhood experiences, including frequent geographic relocations, can impact identity development in this population.

Methodology

- Recruitment: convenience and snowball sampling
- Sample: 40 adolescents aged 13 to 19 years who were considered highly mobile. More than half were in the age range of 13 to 16 years.
- Data collection: semi-structured interviews
- Data analysis: thematic analysis

Population

- Includes 40 adolescents, 27 from military families, 8 from non-military families, and 5 from mixed families.
- All participants were in grades 7 to 12.
- All participants had at least one parent serving in the military.

Sample

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Data Analysis

- Data was organized in Microsoft Excel.
- Data was then transferred to NVivo software for analysis.

Findings

- Adolescents experienced identity foreclosure due to frequent relocations.
- Adolescents struggled to form stable relationships due to constant movement.
- Adolescents felt like they were living in a “world of their own,” with limited understanding from non-military peers.

Implications for Future Research

- Understanding the lived experiences of military adolescents can guide future research and practice.
- Future research could focus on interventions to support military adolescents in their search for identity.

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References


A BRAT's Life

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