

Title:

Improving Health Outcomes of Military Children Through Research and Policy Initiatives

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Session Title:

Ethical Considerations of Veteran- and Military Family-Focused Academic and Research Initiatives

Slot:

F 04: Friday, 28 July 2017: 2:30 PM-3:45 PM

Scheduled Time:

2:50 PM

Keywords:

vulnerable populations, deployment related health concerns and military children

References:

Department of Defense (2010). Report on the impact of deployment of members of the armed forces on their dependent children. Retrieved from:

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/Report-to-Congress-on-Impact-of-Deployment-on-Military-Children.pdf>

Johnson, H. L. & Ling, C. G. (2013). Caring for military children in the 21st century. *Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners*, 25, 195-202.

Rossiter, A. G., D'Aoust, R. F., & Shafer, M. R. (2016). Military serving at what cost? The effects of parental service on the wellbeing of our youngest military members. *Annual Review of Nursing Research*, 34(1), 109-117. doi: 10.1891/0739-6686.34.109. PMID: 26673379

Rossiter, A. G., Dumas, M. A., Wilmoth, M. C., & Patrician, P. A. (2016). I serve 2: Meeting the needs of military children in civilian practice. *Nursing Outlook*. 2016 Sep-Oct;64(5):485-90.doi: 10.1016/j.outlook.2016.05.011. Epub 2016 Jun 9. PMID: 27477834

White House (2011). Strengthening our military families: Meeting America's commitment. Retrieved from:

http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0111_initiative/strengthening_our_military_january_2011.pdf

Abstract Summary:

Military children are subjected to stressors similar to their service member parent placing them at risk for health issues secondary to parental service. They represent a distinct and unique sub-group of the military and policy initiatives aimed at improving the healthcare of military children are needed to strengthen the military family.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
1. Discuss the unique physical, psychological, and behavioral health issues of military children	1. Discuss the relevant research to date regarding the physical, psychological, and behavioral that military children experience and discuss the role the deployment cycle has on the health and welfare of military children
2. Identify the need for research and policy initiatives to improve health related outcomes of military children	2. Discuss critical areas in regards to deficits in research and policy surrounding this vulnerable and often underserved population.

Abstract Text:

Approximately 2.2 million Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve members have been tasked for upward of 3.3 million deployments since the onset of military action in Iraq and Afghanistan. Roughly 40,000 Active Duty servicemembers are married—58% of servicemembers have families and approximately 40% have at least two children. The majority of military children are in early and middle childhood—78% of the children of Active Duty parents are under the age of 11 years and 80% of reserve component children are under 15 years of age.

With the increased operations tempo, the risk for abuse and neglect among military children has increased. Historically, the healthcare needs of military children have been unrecognized outside of military healthcare settings. Military children are at higher risk for abuse and neglect, substance use, and suicide when compared with non-military connected children; stress and depression related to parental deployment or post deployment physical/psychological injuries; behavior and academic issues secondary to emotional distress, frequent moves or a parental deployment; and anxiety that can lead to changes in appetite, disrupted sleep patterns, and impaired immune response which can impact overall physical and psychological health. Upwards of 33% of military children have experienced maltreatment and/or abuse. Sadly, at least 19,000 children have experienced the wounding of a parent and over 2,200 have experienced the death of a parent secondary to military service in Iraq or Afghanistan, which can have long-term physical and psychological health implications for military children.

Research and policy initiatives aimed at identifying and decreasing the long-term effects of parental deployment, minimizing the physical and psychological sequelae, and identifying educational ramifications on children is almost nonexistent. This presentation will discuss the gaps in research and policy and provide guidance as to how to reduce barriers to access, decrease knowledge deficits of healthcare providers, and/or improve consistency in healthcare delivery to this underserved population that is the most vulnerable to the aftermath of war—military children.