

# Special topic paper-1.trial.docx

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**PTSD and its effects on Military personals**

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Military personnel has an increased likelihood of being exposed to various traumatic events during their job. Exposure to traumatic events can lead to these military personnel's exposures to various problems that may target physical or mental health. They may get involved in cardiovascular complications or be subjected to substance abuse, including alcohol use. These changes in physical or mental help can add to various interpersonal problems that can change the habits of military personnel affecting their lifestyle. According to various researches (Jakupcak et al., 2009; Kimerling et al., 2016) it has been observed that veterans and military officials are more subjected to attempting suicide as compared to the general public. 15 to 20% of military personnel have reported suffering from PTSD (Trevillion et al., 2015) and the risk of suicide is two folds among the veterans as compared to non-veterans (Miller et al., 2012). This ratio increases as they experience the symptoms of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). Major issues including alcoholism, sleeplessness, and depression are linked to PTSD in the military community, making individuals subject to severe consequences if not treated timely.

According to Blais et al. (2021), PTSD is the most commonly diagnosed disorder among the US military individuals associated with increased risk compared to the general public in the United States. Social support, demographics (African-American), and military service are the factors that associate with PTSD. For example, in terms of military personnel belonging to ethnic communities or minorities are subjected to increased stress and the provision of lower support from society in difficult times. This decrease support is associated with the increased onset of PTSD symptoms. There are various characteristics in terms of social support; for example, the type of association and source timing are the moderators between PTSD symptoms and social support. Negative interactions increase the risks of post-traumatic stress. Theories of social support indicate that problems of negative support can be more severe and depressive as

compared to the benefits of positive social support. Positive support is desired and useful; therefore, it is perceived as normal, but negative support is depressive as it is and decided and sometimes becomes even severe, affecting the mental balance leading to depression, stress, and anxiety. It can be associated with disappointment and concerns.

Blais et al. (2021) further explained that the occurrence of PTSD symptoms could also be associated with the duration of military service as an important factor leading to exposure to traumatic events. For example, Vietnam veterans were unable to gain social support in a positive manner for this military operation, but they had to serve the orders of the military in Vietnam as they were subjected to draft voluntary or involuntarily for services. Therefore, there are various incidences where the veterans related to the Vietnam War were exposed to traumatic events leading to the occurrence of PTSD (Blais et al., 2021). This suggests that the prevalence of social support can be considered a stronger buffer against PTSD, which can alter the positive or negative impact according to the nature of support provided to the military personnel.

Fischer et al., (2020) stated that the military personnel to post-traumatic stress imposes an increased cost to individuals, families, and society in general. To deal with these issues, increasing the meaning of life can be regarded as a safeguard against the occurrence of the symptoms related to post-traumatic stress. Through various research studies, it has been observed that several evidence-based treatments against PTSD and other theories related to stress claim that increasing the meaning of life and the quality of life plays a critical role in making the individuals adapt to their environment after their exposure to traumatic life events during their service.

Kerr et al. (2020), with an increasing ratio of military officials diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder i.e. two to three times more than general public (Koren, 2005), the concerns of occupational therapy practitioners are also increasing regarding the health, maintenance of the quality of life, performance, maintaining the productivity of work, and decrease in motivation. Continuous exposure to combat on the battlefield can initiate a stress reaction as stress emerges due to exposure to traumatic events, but it affects negatively especially hindering occupational performance. Therefore, occupational therapy should be introduced as an intervention to treat the military personnel to increase their occupational engagement and performance. It should also be aimed at improving the meaning and purpose of life, especially for the individuals who are discharged from military service so that they can become a functional part of the society after their reunion with the society. Kerr et al. (2020) explained that the presence of occupational therapists as an intervention against PTSD among veterans is necessary to facilitate the re-integration of civilian lives so that they can become a part of society. Moreover, the individuals who still have to serve the military gain their consciousness and minimize the impacts of PTSD on their daily routine to make them fully prepared for their jobs. Evidence-based therapies can be efficiently utilized for the treatment of military personnel so that they can be a part of society more efficiently overcoming their struggles.

There are a variety of ways that are affected due to PTSD, among which quality of life is one of the most important areas. Soldiers having PTSD are more likely to develop other mental health problems, including depression and eating disorders (Kimbrel et al., 2016). Kimbrel et al. (2016), explained that people with PTSD are six times more likely to develop symptoms of depression and anxiety. This has a direct impact on an individual's quality of life. Similarly, the victims are at risk for developing a variety of physical health issues, including diabetes, sexual

dysfunction, obesity, and cardiac issues. These health difficulties directly impact the quality of life of an individual in terms of keeping study employment, achievement of ambitions, or having a family.

PTSD has a substantial impact on the life of veterans in a variety of ways, including disrupted relationships with their families and social elements. Domestic violence is also considered a problem that many women face, and their male military spouses often perpetuate it. Domestic abuse among veterans is a serious societal issue with serious medical effects that must be addressed. Domestic violence can be a result of PTSD among male veterans. According to Trevillion et al. (2015), military veterans suffer more from PTSD or depression following their deployment. Individuals with mental disorders are more likely to impose a risk of violence towards others, two to three folds. This research study explains that there is a presence of increased domestic violence, especially among military personnel who are suffering from any mental disorder or PTSD. The individuals deployed from their military services, especially from Afghanistan and previously Iraq, return to their normal lives. However, they suffer from mental disorders due to certain traumatic events, or sometimes PTSD increases the risks of interpersonal violence, most probably domestic violence. Therefore, it is necessary to understand this issue and introduce policies that can help these veterans for safer treatment to return to society safely.

According to Watkins, Sprang, & Rothbaum, (2018), there is an existence of efficient psychological treatments that can be used against PTSD. Among these evidence-based treatments, PE, CPT, and a focused CBT are considered and strongly recommended as the most efficient treatment as a therapy against PTSD. These treatments focus on reducing the trauma, addressing the memories of the traumatic events, and intervention the thoughts or feelings related to tragic events that the individuals have suffered during their life course. It is suggested that the

treatments having strong efficacy <sup>2</sup> should be considered the first line of treatment for PTSD according to the situation and values of the patients.

During the service, the veterans are exposed to various traumatic events that sometimes leave their impression on the memory of the veterans, making them develop the symptoms of PTSD. This can impose various behavioral and health changes, including increased risks of suicide, violence, and other physical health concerns. Therefore, there should be sufficient policies and therapies that can ensure the mental health of the veterans. Improving the quality of life through various therapies, more specifically evidence-based therapies, is considered to be an efficient way of making these veterans a functional part of society upon their deployment.

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