



Prospective Analysis of Psychiatric Risk Factors in Marines Sent to War

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War and Psychiatric Casualties: Prevalence

- Vietnam: NVVRS originally indicated that approximately 31% of Vietnam theater veterans had developed PTSD symptoms, but figure has now been revised to 18%.
- Gulf War I: Roughly 10% of combatants had PTSD, versus 4% in a matched cohort of Gulf War veterans who had not seen combat.





War and Psychiatric Casualties: Risk Factors

- Only a minority of warfighters develop chronic psychological impairment
- Alleged risk factors include high combat severity, low unit cohesion, low cognitive ability, sense of purposelessness, premilitary trauma
- Most evidence is retrospective: NVVRS was 10 to 20 years after Vietnam service
- Almost no prospective research exists



Current Data Sources Allow Prospective OIF/OEF Studies

- **Demographics and Intelligence (DMDC)**
- **Recruit Assessment Program Questionnaire (RAP)**
 - *Psychosocial and medical history*
- **Predeployment Medical Conditions (M2)**
- **Postdeployment Health Assessment (PDHA)**
 - *Exposures and symptoms*



Methods

- **Sample = 6,442 Marines who:**
 1. Completed RAP questionnaire between June 2002 and September 2004
 2. Deployed to **OIF** or **OEF** prior to receiving any psychiatric diagnosis
 3. Completed a military postdeployment form (**PDHA**)
- **Outcome Measure: First postdeployment psychiatric diagnosis in M2 records**



Results

- **We found 441 cases (6.8%) who were diagnosed with a postdeployment psychiatric disorder**
- **The most common diagnoses were:**
 - **substance-related disorders**
 - **anxiety disorders**
 - **mood disorders**



Predictors of Postdeployment Mental Disorders in Marines With no Prior Dx

<u>Predictors</u>	<u>Increased Risk</u>
E1-E2 pay grade	6.6 X
Hospitalized in theater	2.0 X
GED diploma	1.9 X
Tobacco smoker	1.8 X
PTSD endorsed on PDHA	1.7 X
Anger concerns on PDHA	1.6 X
Frequent sick call in theater	1.4 X
Preservice trauma	1.3 X
Low intelligence	1.3 X



Discussion

- **Marines with a psychiatric diagnosis were almost 4x as likely to have been demoted**
- **In-theater medical problems predict diagnoses**
- **PDHA psychiatric “symptoms” predict diagnoses**
- **Issue: We did not find a relationship between “PDHA combat exposures” and psychiatric diagnoses**
 - Critical gap in PDHA is that only 3 items assess war-zone traumas