



The Deployment Life Study

Methodological Overview and Baseline Sample Description

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The Deployment Life Study was designed to provide a deeper understanding of military family readiness and its sources. This report describes the theoretical model that informed the study design, the content of the baseline assessment, the design and procedures associated with data collection, sampling and recruiting procedures, and the baseline sample of military families.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How could researchers design a study that could answer the following questions: How are deployments associated with family well-being and overall functioning? What family- and individual-level factors can account for both positive and negative adaptation to deployment? And what policies and programs can the U.S. Department of Defense develop to help families navigate the stress associated with deployment?
- What are the characteristics of the participating military families?
- How does and will the study collect data?



KEY FINDINGS

To understand how families experience deployments, the Deployment Life Study focuses on four areas: preexisting conditions, deployment experiences, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes

- Preexisting conditions include enduring traits, relationship resources, nonmilitary circumstances, and prior military experiences.
- Deployment experiences consist of deployment characteristics and adaptive processes.
- Intermediate outcomes measured are emergent traits and relationship quality.
- Long-term outcomes measured are marital dissolution, military retention, child academic achievement, financial well-being, physical health, and mental, emotional, and behavioral health.

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Nine times in three years, the Deployment Life Study assesses the service member, his or her spouse, and, if possible, one child in the household

- Initial, baseline assessment began in March 2011 and ended in August 2012.
- Follow-up assessments continue at four-month intervals for each participant.
- Interviewers use phone and web survey methods.



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