



# Highlights of Recent RAND Health Research

## Military Health and Health Care

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As the nation's largest health care provider, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) faces significant challenges. Some are unique to the military environment, while others resemble those faced by civilian health systems. For example, DoD must maintain deployable medical assets to support military operations, facilitate troops' medical readiness, and offer integrated health care to beneficiaries. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) health care system also faces challenges in meeting veterans' health care needs within a fixed budget. Both systems provide primary and specialty health care services to diverse populations, including the war wounded. Combining its expertise in health and defense policy, RAND has examined policy issues surrounding military medical care needs and the care systems intended to meet them.

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### Key Findings

#### Effects of Soldiers' Deployment on Children's Academic Performance and Behavioral Health

Richardson, Amy, Anita Chandra, Laurie T. Martin, Claude Messan Setodji, Bryan W. Hallmark, Nancy F. Campbell, Stacy Ann Hawkins, Patrick Grady, RAND Corporation, 2011

This study found that Army children whose parents have deployed 19 months or more since 2001 score lower on standardized tests than other Army children whose parents have deployed for shorter periods of time and that teachers and school counselors report child social and emotional challenges while a parent is deployed. The report describes the academic and behavioral health challenges these children face related to deployment, identifies the barriers to addressing these challenges, and offers recommendations to better meet the needs of these children.

#### The War Within: Preventing Suicide in the U.S. Military

Ramchand, Rajeev, Joie Acosta, Rachel M. Burns, Lisa H. Jaycox, and Christopher G. Pernin, RAND Corporation, 2011

Lengthy and multiple tours of duty are exacting a substantial toll on members of the U.S. armed forces. Researchers found that since 2006, the military suicide rate has climbed higher than among comparable civilian populations, suggesting that this gap is narrowing and for some services the rate may actually exceed that of the comparable civilian population. The study offers recommendations informed by research conducted in both civilian and military sectors for the U.S. Department of Defense. Summarized in RAND Research Brief RB-9529 (see below).

## **A Needs Assessment of New York State Veterans: Final Report to the New York State Health Foundation**

Schell, Terry L., and Terri Tanielian, editors, RAND Corporation, 2011

This study found that nearly a quarter of veterans of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq living in New York state have a probable diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and/or major depression. Compared with similar individuals in the general population, the veterans studied were at an eightfold greater risk of probable PTSD and a two- to fourfold greater risk of major depression. Summarized in RAND Research Brief RB-9586 (see below).

### **Views from the Homefront:**

#### **The Experiences of Youth and Spouses from Military Families**

Chandra, Anita, Sandraluz Lara-Cinisomo, Lisa H. Jaycox, Terri Tanielian, Bing Han, Rachel M. Burns, Teague Ruder, RAND Corporation, 2011

In this study, the authors describe the health and well-being of children from military families from the perspectives of the child and nondeployed parent. Children from military families reported more emotional difficulties compared with national samples. Cumulative length of parental deployment and poorer nondeployed caregiver mental health were associated with a greater number of challenges. Summarized in RAND Research Brief RB-9488 (see below).

#### **Disparate Prevalence Estimates of PTSD Among Service Members Who Served in Iraq and Afghanistan: Possible Explanations**

Ramchand, Rajeev, Terry L. Schell, Benjamin R. Karney, Karen Chan Osilla, Rachel M. Burns, and Leah Barnes Caldarone, *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, Vol. 23, February 2010, pp. 59–68.

Estimated rates of PTSD prevalence among veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan vary widely. This study found that these variations stemmed from differences in study methods used to define PTSD and in study samples. Summarized in RAND Research Brief RB-9509 (see below).

### **Research Briefs**

#### **The War Within: Suicide Prevention in the U.S. Military**

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9529.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9529.html)

#### **Better Understanding the Needs of Veterans in New York State**

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9586.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9586.html)

### **Views from the Homefront:**

#### **How Military Youth and Spouses Are Coping with Deployment**

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9568.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9568.html)

## **Studies' Estimates of PTSD Prevalence Rates for Returning Service Members Vary Widely**

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9509.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9509.html)

## **Ongoing Research**

### **Longitudinal Assessment of Family Readiness**

This project is examining the effects of deployment on military families, and identifying the antecedents and consequences of family readiness by collecting longitudinal data from Navy, Air Force, and Marine families across the deployment cycle.

### **Innovative Practices for Supporting Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injuries**

This project is identifying and evaluating the effectiveness of Department of Defense programs designed to support psychological health and traumatic brain injuries.

### **A Randomized Effectiveness Trial of a Systems-Level Approach to Stepped Care for War-Related PTSD**

This project is comparing a primary care treatment package (centralized telephone care management with preference-based stepped care) with optimized usual primary care for military personnel returning from Iraq or Afghanistan with PTSD and associated disorders.

*Updated May 2011*