

Article Review

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Influences of Cumulative Risk and Protective Factors on the Adjustment of Adolescents in Military Families

Within the article, *Influences of Cumulative Risk and Protective Factors on the Adjustment of Adolescents in Military Families*, the authors sought to address substantive questions regarding the well-being of adolescents. These included “What are the relationships between cumulative risk and adolescent outcomes of depression, academic performance, and persistence (a proxy for resilience)? What aspects of social life, conceptualized as a range of connections with others, mediate the relationships between risk and relevant outcomes?” (Lucier et al., 2015).

The authors went into the study with the prediction that the mental health of an adolescent is poorer when external stressors are increased. They predict that having healthy relationships and connections with others, can positively impact an adolescent's mental health. This also includes having a cohesive, stable sense of family and support. Typically, children and adolescents within military families experience frequent change such as multiple moves or a parent being deployed. Therefore, the authors hypothesize that an increase of the cumulative stressors on an adolescent within a military family, will result in an increase of depression, poorer academic performance, and less persistence (Lucier et al., 2015). They also hypothesize that an increase of protective factors such as family or community support, will diminish the link between cumulative risk and the outcome for the adolescent (Lucier et al., 2015).

In order to test their hypotheses, they collected data using a sample of 1,036 youth from 4 different Army bases. One base was located in Europe while the other three were in the United States. In order to recruit participants, they utilized radio and print advertising, flyers at military

and community stores, and email blasts to service members (Lucier et al., 2015). Each participant had at least one parent who was actively in the military and was between 11 and 18 years of age. Participation was voluntary, and each participant gave their consent. If a participant was under the age of 18, their parents' consent was also obtained. The study also assigned each participant a number that would be used to take the survey on the computer. This allowed it to be confidential.

Data was collected via quantitative surveys taken on the computer. The participants were asked a series of questions that each pertained to a risk category. If the participant did experience that risk factor, they received 1 point for that particular category. At the end of the questionnaire, the total points were tallied. That final number was the subject's cumulative risk. These risk factors were also compared individually to see the impact on adolescents' depressive symptoms, success in school, and overall persistence. These categories tested were minority status, non-married parents, social isolation, a parent currently deployed, 2 plus school transitions within 5 years, enlisted rank, 2 military parents, living outside the US, and living 30 plus minutes from base (Lucier et al., 2015).

The study also assessed the adolescents' program engagement, depressive symptoms, academic performance, and persistence. They utilized survey questions to assess the participants within these categories. After tallying the scores for each category, they were able to compare them to the participant's risk scores.

Through this study, they found that although an increase of cumulative risks negatively impact an adolescent, the presence of family or community support can diminish this negative impact. The authors felt this topic was vital to research because it sheds light on an effective way to better the lives of adolescents in military families. The study concluded that the additional

stressors placed on these adolescents can negatively impact them. However, by having family support, community support, and healthy relationships, the risks are significantly reduced.

Parent Discrepancies in Ratings of Child Behaviors Following Wartime Deployment

In the article *Parent Discrepancies in Ratings of Child Behaviors Following Wartime Deployment*, the authors sought to examine how the mental health of military parents impacts their assessment of their child's mental health. According to the authors, there are many studies that have been done in order to test military children's adjustment. However, the overall results have been inconclusive, and this may be due to parent discrepancies in the ratings of their child's behavior. This study seeks to assess the child's behavior from multiple perspectives, which can mitigate the opportunity for major discrepancies. The authors predict that mental health issues such as post wartime PTSD can impact how a parent views their child's externalizing and internalizing symptoms.

The sample consisted of 174 families who were selected from a larger, randomized sample. Each family had at least one child between the ages of 4 and 12 living with them, and had at least one parent who was deployed in the Iraq or Afghanistan war (Chesmore et al., 2018). Participating families were recruited through outreach to military organizations, media outlets, and word-of-mouth (Chesmore et al., 2018). The participants completed either an online assessment or had an in-home assessment performed. Online assessments participants received \$25, while those who had in-home assessments received \$50 (Chesmore et al., 2018).

The authors felt this study was important because the findings can help inform clinicians who are working with military children. It can lead clinicians to even address any potential mental health issues the parents are dealing with.

References

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