

Southern Adventist University
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Reflection Paper #2

By

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Gallars, J., Foy, D., Donahoe, C., & Goldfarb, J. (1988). Post-traumatic stress disorder in Vietnam combat veterans: Effects of traumatic violence exposure with military adjustment. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 1*(2), 181-192. doi:10.1002/jts.2490010206.

Article Summary

The article I covered this week was one in which thirty high-combat veterans from that had returned from Vietnam were diagnosed with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder were compared with another group that did not have any evidence of PTSD with regards to exposure to traumatic violence during combat. The Post Traumatic positive group showed significantly more exposure to traumatic violence and had been involved with or witnessed more extreme situations while in combat.

It was also shown that both groups had increased their drug and alcohol use and reported that upon arriving home they had fewer social supports than before they had left. The results of the research supported the implication that trauma was the major factor in the disorder.

Critique

Post-Traumatic Stress disorder has been around for a long time but just recently it has gained momentum as a large number of combat veterans from Vietnam and the Gulf war have been seeking help within the Veterans Administration for problems such as nightmares, intrusive combat related memories and numbing. Although Post Traumatic Stress reaches across several boundaries and not only affects men and women from combat situations, the large number of returning war veterans has thrust it into the forefront of the social service world.

In the 1980 edition of the DSM, PTSD was formally recognized as a mental disorder and criteria in which combat related stress was considered a severe life stressor. At the present time there are two models that are used to gauge PTSD. The first is the Stress evaporation model

which looks at the psychosocial factors prior to military combat. The second is the residual stress model which identifies the combat related incident is the primary reason for the disorder.

Reflection

The article noted that even after decade of the end of the conflict in Vietnam, it is estimated that 60% of the veterans are reporting symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress. This is astonishing to think that this far after the conflict this many individuals are still coping with issues such as nightmares, survivor guilt and a detachment from the real world. With the war in Iraq coming to an end and one still going in Afghanistan the issues that face the military in dealing with these veterans will only continue to grow.

While post-Traumatic stress affects several different people from children who were abused as children to adults that have seen disturbing things within their life, it has just recently become the number one injury facing our military upon their return home from the conflicts abroad. The military has recognized this as has partnered with civilian social workers due to the lack of social workers within the Veterans Administration.