

JOINT EVENT

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**Comparing structural pathways on the effects of deployment type on mental and physical health****Cancio Roberto**

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Research to assess the mental and physical health impact of wartime military service has often been conducted years or decades after the return home. While previous research conducted after military conflicts has shown that combat exposure results in increased risk of PTSD, depression, substance abuse, functional impairment in social settings and the increased use of health care services, the narrative around deployment remains scarce. For example, researchers have treated deployments as single dichotomous measures and only focusing on a respondents' participation in a deployment, while not considering the mission of that deployment. To date, no studies focus on deployment returnees' health impact from different exposures (e.g., witness violence) and deployment types (e.g., peacekeeping, humanitarian and combat). This presentation serves to address the impact of deployment types on the mental and physical health of active duty military service members. Using structural equation modeling (SEM) as a novel approach, this study consider variations of self-reported health to test the impact of several life events and demographic factors on the overall effect on health and wellness from three military deployment types, with particular attention to substance use as a result of different deployment typologies. The study sample contains information about 21,449 active duty service members from the army study to assess risk and resilience in service members: all army study (2015). Respondents' race/ethnicity, age, deployment duration, and deployment type were modeled using SEM procedures to determine the effects on returnees' health. Particular attention focused on the differences among the frequency of certain substances. Study findings indicate that unique exposures from varying types of deployments change not only the degree of deployment-related stress but more importantly, the overall effect on health. Service members who were exposed to more violent deployment saw a decline in their mental health. Different degrees of violent exposures and military operational directives from mission-specific deployments affect the mental and physical health for military service members. In particular, nuances rose for ethnic and racial groups and between men and woman.

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