



Armed Forces Staff Network Bulletin

April – May 2023

The aim of this current awareness bulletin is to provide a digest of recent guidelines, reports, research and best practice.

For more information on Lincolnshire's armed forces population go to the following summaries prepared by the Lincolnshire County Council Public Health Intelligence Team:

- [Armed Forces](#)
- [Armed Forces – Characteristics](#)

Recently published research

Awareness of and willingness to access support among UK military personnel who reported a mental health difficulty.

Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health

This study explored which sources of support UK armed forces personnel are most aware of, and willing to use, for a self-reported mental health problem and the possible differences between serving and ex-serving personnel. Military personnel, irrespective of serving status, were most aware of, and willing to access, formal medical services. In contrast, there was a low awareness of and willingness to use ex-serving-specific support services among ex-serving personnel.

Click here for full access: [Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health](#)

Dementia in Scottish military veterans: early evidence from a retrospective cohort study.

Psychological Medicine, 2023, 53(3), pp.1015-1020

This study explored the risk of dementia in Scottish military veterans aged up to 73 years in comparison with people who have never served. There was no evidence to suggest that military service increased the risk of dementia, although this may change as the cohort ages. The well-documented association with PTSD shows no evidence of being stronger in veterans; by contrast, the association of mood disorder with dementia is much stronger in veterans.

Click here for full access: [Psychological Medicine](#)

Educating nurses to deliver optimum care to military veterans and their families

Science Talks, 2023

There is no United Kingdom undergraduate programme to prepare student nurses to care for military veterans and their families. Evidenced-based educational sessions were delivered at two Universities in England. Results indicate knowledge acquisition, high levels of satisfaction, and changes in attitudes leading to students being confident to engage with military veterans and address issues aligned to stigma.

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Experiences of ethnic minority personnel in the armed forces: A systematic review.

Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health, 2023, 9(1), pp.5-14

The available literature shows that ethnic minority serving personnel and Veterans experience greater disadvantage than their native counterparts, both during and after service. Ethnic minority personnel reported poorer health than white personnel and fear of criticism from their ethnic minority community on disclosure of traumatic experiences. Ethnic minority personnel were also more likely to access formal mental health services yet less likely to engage in treatment, particularly women. Three themes were identified: cultural identity, health status and health utilization, and trauma and discrimination.

Click here for full access: [Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health](#)

Gambling problems among United Kingdom armed forces veterans: Associations with gambling motivation and posttraumatic stress disorder.

International Gambling Studies, 2023, 23(1), pp.35-56.

The present findings contribute further international evidence that veterans are a population vulnerable to problem gambling. Veterans with PTSD or C-PTSD are most at-risk and may engage in problematic gambling to escape/avoid distress. Routine screening for gambling problems should be undertaken with current and former military personnel, and further research is needed on the interplay between gambling motivation and veterans' mental health.

Click here for full access: [International Gambling Studies](#)

Impact of discrimination and coping on veterans' willingness to seek treatment for physical and mental health problems

Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, 2023, 37(2), pp. 209-221

This study aimed to provide insight into health disparities among Veterans by (a) documenting the prevalence of physical and mental health problems in a racially diverse sample of Veterans, (b) comparing Veterans' willingness to seek treatment for various physical and mental health conditions, and (c) examining the impact of discrimination and coping on willingness to seek treatment.

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Putting the pieces together to understand anger in combat veterans and service members: psychological and physical contributors

Journal of Psychiatric Research, 2023, 159, pp. 57-65

Compared to civilians, combat veterans and service members (C-V/SM) report higher levels of anger and often have risk factors for anger including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), pain, alcohol use, and impaired sleep. The current study extends previous literature by simultaneously examining factors associated with anger using a multivariable model in a large sample of C-V/SM.

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Rurality impacts pain care for female veterans similarly to male veterans

Journal of Rural Health, 2023, 39(2), pp. 313-319

Rural disparities exist in access to multidisciplinary pain care with higher rates of opioid prescribing in rural regions. Among Veterans, who have prevalent rates of chronic pain, women often evidence complex presentations, multiple comorbidities, and dissatisfaction with care. This study investigates the impact of rurality on pain care for women specifically, and whether this varies from the impact of rurality for men.

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Practice nurses encouraged to use direct web-based referrals for ex-Forces patients

Practice Nursing, December 2022, 34(1), pp. 34

For ex-Forces patients, a dedicated career coaching service is available across England and Wales, to which general practice nurses can refer directly, using a simple web-based form. Social prescribing is widely recognised as a valuable and cost-effective intervention that can reduce workload in primary care. Most recently, the move to allow NHS social prescribers to prescribe heating to patients with long-term conditions that get worse in the cold, was welcomed by many frontline staff.

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We can provide training on how to search healthcare databases and resources as well as showing you how to appraise the information that you find: <https://www.nhslinclslibrary.uk/training/>

Online Resources

BMJ Best Practice is a clinical decision support tool that provides step-by-step guidance on diagnosis, prognosis, treatment and prevention of a wide variety of conditions:

<https://bestpractice.bmj.com/oafed>

ClinicalKey is a database which supports healthcare professionals by providing access to the latest evidence across specialties: <https://www.clinicalkey.com/>