

THE MILLENNIUM COHORT PROGRAM

A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS STUDY



Protecting service member, veteran, and family health

Dear Colleague,

We are pleased to share with you our most recent Millennium Cohort Program updates. This newsletter includes brief summaries of new scientific publications released in recent months.

Topics covered in these papers include factors associated with response to the Millennium Cohort Study survey over a 15-year period, a prospective examination of family separation and externalizing symptoms among children, and mental health disparities by race, ethnicity, and sex among service members and veterans.

Sincerely,

Rudy Rull, PhD, MPH
Principal Investigator
Millennium Cohort Study
rudolph.p.rull2.civ@health.mil

Valerie Stander, PhD
Principal Investigator
Millennium Cohort Family Study
valerie.a.stander.civ@health.mil

Hope McMaster, PhD
Principal Investigator
Study of Adolescent Resilience
hope.m.mcmaster.civ@health.mil

Survey response over 15 years of follow-up in the Millennium Cohort Study¹

Across a 3-15 year follow-up period, the average response rate among almost 198,833 Millennium Cohort Study participants was 60%. Factors associated with follow-up survey response over time included increased educational attainment, married status, female sex, older age, military deployment, greater life stress, and poorer mental/physical health status.

Family separation from military service and children's externalizing symptoms²

During a 3-year follow-up period, we investigated how family separation from the military affects the behavioral adjustment of early school-age children. We also explored whether factors such as military spouse employment, parental financial stress, marital quality, or the parenting alliance influenced children's adjustment during this transition. Findings indicated that when the spouse was employed and the family separated from the military, children exhibited fewer behavioral problems. Additionally, a strong parenting alliance was associated with decreased behavioral problems among children in families that remained in the military.

Disparities in mental health among U.S. service members and veterans³

Racial, ethnic, and sex disparities in mental health among service members and veterans persist, even after accounting for sociodemographic, military, health-related and social support factors. Despite increased availability to mental health care among military populations, these findings underscore the importance of culturally relevant and targeted outreach to address these disparities.

References

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2. Richardson SM, Pflieger JC, Hisle-Gorman E, Briggs EC, Fairbank JA, Stander VA. (2023). Family separation from military service and children's externalizing symptoms: Exploring moderation by non-military spouse employment, family financial stress, marital quality, and the parenting alliance. *Social Development*, 00, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12713>.
3. Sharifian N, Kolaja CA, LeardMann CA, Castañeda SF, Carey FR, Seay JS, Carlton KN, Rull RP, Millennium Cohort Study Team. Racial, Ethnic, and Sex Disparities in Mental Health Among U.S. Service Members and Veterans: Findings from the Millennium Cohort Study. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2023 Nov 15:kwad221. doi: 10.1093/aje/kwad221. Epub ahead of print. [PMID: 37968361](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37968361/).



For more information on recent publications, including links to full-text, please visit the study websites: millenniumcohort.org and familycohort.org