Children of deployed personnel had elevated symptoms of depression as did their parents (as measured by self-report) when compared to non-deployed parents and their children. These differences maintained when controlling for these measures pre-deployment and for intervening variables like rank or child age. Families and children of deployed personnel experienced more life stressors than non-deployed parents and their children. Boys and younger children seem to be more vulnerable to the effects of deployment. Deployment rarely caused pathological levels of symptoms in otherwise healthy children.

Implications for Programs:
- Support groups (both formal and informal) for military spouses may prove beneficial to families with deployed Service members and should continue to be supported and encouraged.
- Inclusion of children in existing support groups where children received an education component regarding deployment may assist children in mediating the potential effects of parental deployment.
- Structured programming (mentoring, 4-H) focusing on building support and resiliency for those groups particularly vulnerable (boys and younger children) may prove beneficial.

Implications for Policies:
- Initiating screenings in school or health-care settings for younger children and boys may assist in identifying those most vulnerable to depressive symptoms during deployment.

Avenues for Future Research:
- Future research on the possible long-term effects into adulthood for children raised during Desert Storm operations should be conducted.
- Future research should examine possible differences by branch and/or component.
Background Information

Methodology:

- The authors used cross-sectional and longitudinal survey data completed by mothers and their children (N = 383). A series of statistical tests (ANOVAs and MANOVAs) comparing groups were used to obtain results.
- Measures collected from children included the Child Behavior Checklist, the Children’s Depression Inventory, and the Revised Children’s Manifest Anxiety Scale. Measures collected from Parents included the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, the Life Events Record, the Psychological Coping Resources scale, and the Social Assets Scale.
- This study focused on mothers and children from military families (branch and component not specified).

Participants:

- This sample included 383 children and their caretakers. Mothers were on average 34 years of age (no range was provided); children were between the ages of 4 and 17 (the average age was not specified), 55% of the children were males (45% were females).
- The majority of the participants were Caucasian (53%), 31% African-American, 9% Hispanic, and 7% from other ethnic backgrounds.

Limitations:

- Those who participated may differ from non-participants in a way that is not measured, but affected the outcome variables. For instance, those that participated may have been functioning better than those who did not participate.
- Parents and children may be trying to respond in the “best” way.

Assessing Research that Works

Research Design and Sample

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<th>Quality Rating:</th>
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<th>Appropriate (★★)</th>
<th>Limited (★)</th>
<th>Questionable (★)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The design of the study (e.g., research plan, sample, recruitment) used to address the research question was...</td>
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Research Methods

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<td>The research methods (e.g., measurement, analysis) used to answer the research question were...</td>
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Limitations

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<th>Limited Several Limitations (★☆)</th>
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Implications

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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>The implications of this research to programs, policies and the field, stated by the authors, are...</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Not applicable because authors do not discuss implications

Overall Quality Rating

Prepared by Military REACH Team.
For additional information, please visit http://reachmilitaryfamilies.arizona.edu