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Military personnel likely victims of PTSD

By Pankhuri Kapoor

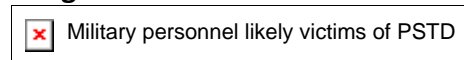
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#### Teaser:

**Texas, April 20:** A new study suggests that post traumatic stress disorder or 'PTSD' finds easy hosts among military recruits with poor mental or physical health post employment.

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The research was initiated by a team of US researchers headed by Keith A. Young from the Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine. They propose that prevention and protection could be offered to vulnerable personnel to protect them from stress.

US researchers conducted the study on 5410 men and women employed in the military. All the participants were healthy and PTSD free at the time of the commencement of the study.

Two questionnaires were prepared for the purpose. One was to collect information about the health of the employee before stress in a military operation and one to collect data after the traumatic experience.

During the follow up, it was found that 395 participants of the study developed PTSD symptoms or diagnosis. Those with low health scores had 2-3 times the risk of developing PTSD as compared to those with a high score.

The PTSD acquired personnel were more females, younger, less educated, not married, current smokers, problem drinkers and stressful souls.

"It's pretty clear that people coming in with reduced mental capacity are more likely to develop PTSD after combat. Our hypothesis is that depression [define](#) [2] and PTSD have a commonality of a brain anatomical variant. It is relatively hard to disentangle poor mental health from poor physical health,"

says Keith Young.

But a professor from the Columbia University has doubts about the findings of the study. He says, "Answers on a questionnaire are far from optimal, and they do not have good data on exposure. So is this enough to base policy on? It probably isn't, but it certainly is enough to follow up with more intensive investigation."

But the researchers conclude, "Further research is also needed to develop effective screening tools and programs to prevent PTSD."

The study has been published in the online edition of a journal called 'BMJ'.

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