

Mental health problems more likely for teen boys in military families

A new study out of the University of Washington suggests that children with parents who serve in the armed forces are more likely to suffer mental health problems related to military deployment.

Parental military service is particularly hard on boys, said lead author Sarah Reed, who has a master's degree from the University of Washington School of Public Health.

"Boys, particularly older adolescents, 10th and 12th graders, had much higher odds of reporting a low quality of life, depressed mood and thoughts of suicide," Reed said.

The study, "Adolescent well-being in Washington state military families," was based on self-reported data from 8th, 10th, and 12th graders who took the Washington State 2008 Health Youth Survey.

Reed says schools in the state don't have effective support programs to help kids cope with parental deployment.

"Military families deserve better. To me, that's the key message that we have not done a good job of paying attention to families and their kids' needs."

The study did not account for length of deployment or the parent deployed.

The study was published online in the *American Journal of Public Health*.