

# THE MILLENNIUM COHORT PROGRAM

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



## Protecting service member, veteran, and family health

Dear Colleagues,

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.

We also want to announce that Dr. Hope McMaster, who has been a senior scientist and Deputy Principal Investigator with the Family Study for over 13 years, will step into the role of Principal Investigator (PI). Dr. Valerie Stander will transition from PI to Deputy PI after 9 years of outstanding leadership!

Sincerely,

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

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

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

### ***Stress exposure and posttraumatic stress symptoms of military spouses and service member partners<sup>1</sup>***

Using a structural equation model, this paper considers the interrelationship between individual and family-level stress exposures and military spouse resources, including problem-solving appraisals and problem-solving support, and their associations with posttraumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) among both partners in Millennium Cohort Family Study military couples. The findings emphasize the central role of spouses in military families, as more psychological resources among spouses appeared to buffer against the deleterious effects of stress exposure on both their own and their partners mental health.

### ***Three-item Dimensions of Anger Reactions scale<sup>2</sup>***

Given the prevalence of problematic anger and its association with adverse outcomes, it is vital to develop a very brief measure that can be easily included in research and clinical contexts. Using data from two large military samples with current and former service members in Australia and the US, this study reported on a newly developed 3-item Dimensions of Anger Reactions (DAR-3) scale. The DAR-3 assesses anger intensity, frequency, and duration. Results were consistent across the samples in terms of the scale's reliability, validity, and cut-off score. The DAR-3 has practical utility for military and veteran populations.

### ***PTSD, Veteran Health Administration, use and care seeking among post 9/11 US veterans<sup>3</sup>***

Veterans with probable PTSD were more likely to use Veterans Health Administration (VHA) services than veterans without probable PTSD. Among these veterans with probable PTSD, those with recent VHA use were more likely to have reported seeking care for PTSD compared to those who did not use VHA services in the past year.

### ***A brief measure of family resilience<sup>4</sup>***

Military service is associated with a host of stressors that can adversely affect the health and well-being of service members and their families. We developed and validated a brief measure of military family resilience based on the Walsh Family Resilience Framework to assess shared belief systems, organizational patterns, communication processes. The brief 9-item scale demonstrated strong reliability and validity and has practical utility for military family research.

### ***Study of Adolescent Resilience (SOAR) protocol<sup>5</sup>***

This protocol manuscript describes the Study of Adolescent Resilience (SOAR), a population-based cohort study of military youth. SOAR invites adolescents, their military parents, and coparents (if applicable) to complete baseline self-report surveys that may be linked with archival records from multiple sources. Adolescents complete follow-up surveys every 18-24 months until they reach emergent adulthood to facilitate the assessment of the long-term impacts of parental military service on adolescent health and well-being.

## **References**

1. Sullivan KS, Park Y, Richardson S, Stander V, Jaccard J. (2024). The role of problem solving appraisal and support in the relationship between stress exposure and posttraumatic stress symptoms of military spouses and service member partners. *Stress and health : Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress*, 10.1002/smi.3371. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.3371>
2. Forbes D, LeardMann CA, Lawrence-Wood E, Villalobos J, Madden K, Gutierrez IA, Cowlshaw S, Baur J, Adler AB. Three-Item Dimensions of Anger Reactions Scale. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2024 Feb 5;7(2):e2354741. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.54741. PMID: 38315485; PMCID: PMC10844994.
3. Porter B, Dozier ME, Seelig AD, Zhu Y, Patoilo MS, Boyko EJ, Rull RP. Posttraumatic stress disorder, Veterans Health Administration use, and care-seeking among recent-era U.S. veterans. *J Trauma Stress*. 2024 Feb 29. doi: 10.1002/jts.23019. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 38424733.
4. Ray TN, Esquivel AP, Stander VA, McMaster HS, Roesch SC, Walsh F. (2024) The Development, Validity, and Reliability of a Brief Self-Report Measure of Family Resilience in Military Families. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, doi: 10.1080/07481756.2024.2321937
5. Tannenbaum K and McMaster HS (2024) The Study of Adolescent Resilience (SOAR): a research protocol. *Front. Child Adolesc. Psychiatry* 3:1346726. doi: 10.3389/frcha.2024.1346726



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