



Brain Injury
Association
of America

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Domestic Abuse in Military Families

Every 21 Seconds, One Person in the United States Sustains a Traumatic Brain Injury

When Abuse Happens on the Homefront

Those in the military face a unique set of challenges when raising a family, such as intermittent single parenting, how to help children cope with loss and separation, frequent relocation, financial management in the face of deployment and children's worries about their parents working in dangerous situations. All too often the added stress is too much to bear and abuse occurs.⁵

- ◆ In 2000 there were nearly 17,000 reports of child abuse and more than 8,000 substantiated reports of child abuse to the U.S. military's Family Advocacy Program (FAP).¹
- ◆ The alleged abuser may have been an active duty service member, the civilian parent, or a caregiver outside the family. However, in 92 percent of the substantiated reports the alleged abuser was a family member.¹
- ◆ In 1999 the total number of spouse-abuse reports just within Army ranks was an alarming 8,286, with 4,810 of those reports substantiated by evidence.⁵
- ◆ Studies reveal that spouse abuse is most frequent among young couples who have not yet developed joint coping and communication skills.⁵

What is a Traumatic Brain Injury?

An insult to the brain, not of degenerative or congenital nature caused by an external physical force that may produce a diminished or altered state of consciousness, which results in an impairment of cognitive abilities or physical functioning. It can also result in disturbance of behavioral or emotional functioning.

Creating a better future through brain injury prevention, research, education and advocacy

Domestic Abuse Can Result in a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- ♦ Approximately up to one in three women are abused by a partner in their lifetime.
- ♦ It is estimated that a woman is beaten every nine seconds in the United States, which results in the leading cause of emergency room visits for women.²
- ♦ Domestic violence is the leading cause of serious injury to women between the ages of 15-44.⁶
- ♦ The head is a primary target in domestic attacks against women and the effects of these batterings can result in cumulative brain injuries.⁶
- ♦ In 70% of homes where a woman is beaten, children also are beaten.⁷
- ♦ Domestic violence has immediate and long-term detrimental effects on children.
- ♦ 1.5 million people will sustain a TBI annually.⁴
- ♦ 50,000 people will die annually as a result of a TBI.⁴
- ♦ 80,000 people annually experience the onset of long-term disabilities following a TBI.⁴
- ♦ There are currently at least 5.3 million Americans living with a disability as a result of a TBI.⁴

Supports and Services

- ♦ A military installation's Family Advocacy Program may be contacted through its medical treatment facility, Family Support Program or installation security.
- ♦ The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides callers with crisis intervention, information about domestic violence and referrals to local programs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in many languages. Call their hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE or 1-800-799-7233.
- ♦ The Brain Injury Association of America can offer information and resources. The Association may be reached through its Family Helpline at 1-800-444-6443 or its website at www.biausa.org or email at: familyhelpline@biausa.org.

Sources:

- 1 David W. Lloyd, Family Advocacy Program, Military Community and Family Policy, March 21, 2001
- 2 American Psychological Association, Violence and Family: Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family (1996), p.10
- 4 Centers for Disease Control. "Traumatic Brain Injury in the United States: A Report to Congress." (January 16, 2001)
- 5 Hot Topics - Current Issues for Army Leaders, Soldiers Magazine, Summer 2000
- 6 Barrier PA: Domestic Violence - Mayo Clinic Proc. 73: 271-274, 1998
Melvin SY: Rhyne MC: Domestic Violence. Advanced Internal Medicine. 43:1-25, 1998
- 7 Muelleman KL, Reawer J, Sanson TG et al: An emergency medicine approach to violence throughout the life cycle. Academic Emergency Medicine. 3:708-715. 1996.