

COMMENT

Open Access



Parental conscription and cumulative adverse experiences in war-affected children and adolescents and their impact on mental health: a comment following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022

Katrin Erlewein^{1,2,3*}, Emily Gossmann^{1,2,3} and Jörg M. Fegert^{1,2,3}

Abstract

Background With Russia's invasion of the Ukraine on February 2022, Ukrainian children and adolescents have been exposed to several stressful life events. In addition to the confrontation with war, flight and parent-child separation due to flight and forced displacement, the majority underwent another challenge at the initial phase of the war: the fatherly separation due to conscription.

Main body In the literature, the negative effects of exposure to war and flight/refuge, parent-child separation due to flight or forced displacement and parental deployment are well established. In the context of self-experienced war, the effects of parent-child separation caused by compulsory military service have not yet been sufficiently taken into account. However, the findings of the literature on the impact of these events on the mental health of children and adolescents show that they are at high risk for developing numerous psychological and behavioral problems.

Conclusion As children's and adolescents' mental health might be severely affected by war and its consequences, interventional programs that address the special needs of those children and adolescents are crucial.

Keywords Children, Adolescents, War, Flight, Refuge, Parent-child separation, Conscription, Compulsory military service, Mental health

*Correspondence:

Katrin Erlewein
katrin.erlewein@uniklinik-ulm.de

¹Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry/Psychotherapy,
University Hospital Ulm, Steinhövelstrasse 5, 89075 Ulm, Germany

²Competence Area Mental Health Prevention in the Competence
Network Preventive Medicine Baden-Württemberg, Ulm, Germany

³German Center for Mental Health (DZPG), partner site Ulm, Ulm,
Germany



© The Author(s) 2024. **Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>. The Creative Commons Public Domain Dedication waiver (<http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>) applies to the data made available in this article, unless otherwise stated in a credit line to the data.

Background

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022 highlights again the several challenges war-affected children and adolescents are exposed to. Besides the ongoing threat to their lives, war-affected children and adolescents are also confronted with traumatizing experiences such as living in bunkers, forfeits in their education and health care, poverty and separation from their family, caregivers and other loved ones [1, 2]. But not only children and adolescents who remain in war-exposed countries experience these drastic events. People who seek refuge in general face most likely additional distress during their flight, too [2, 3]. This severely impacts children's and adolescents' daily lives and can also deteriorate their mental health.

The negative consequences of war, flight/refuge and parent-child separation due to flight and forced displacement are documented in empirical literature [4–13]. However, another reason for parent-child separation became apparent by Russia's invasion of Ukraine: the compulsory military service of men [2]. The effects of a parent remaining in a war-torn country to serve in the war and the risk of being injured or killed on the mental health of children and adolescents have hardly been addressed in scientific research to date. However, this topic is highly relevant not only in the current context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine but also because in some countries, laws still allow to enforce compulsory military service in times of war, crisis or national emergency [14] and new debates about reintroducing compulsory military service have arisen [14, 15]. While there is a large body of research on the psychosocial effects of parental voluntary military deployment on children and adolescents who remain in their safe home country (see Sect. 2.3.), research on the impact of parent-child separation due to conscription, especially in the context of self-experiencing war and children and adolescents themselves being forced to leave their home country is missing. This makes it difficult to draw conclusions on the psychological burden and the long-term effects on affected minors. Therefore, this comment aims to approach this topic by identifying the psychosocial effects of this multi-stressful situation.

Main text

Exposure to war and flight/refuge

Children and adolescents who are exposed to armed conflicts often experience several changes in their life simultaneously. This comprises direct consequences such as the risk of death, injuries, disabilities and torture [16] and indirect consequences as well [3, 16, 17]. The results of Betancourt and colleagues [18] illustrate that, among others, refugee children's and adolescents' exposure to war or political violence often co-occur with traumatic loss,

forced displacement and community violence. Furthermore, the literature indicates that some refugee children and adolescents show signs of internalizing/emotional and/or externalizing/behavioral problems [18, 19], have a high probability of a clinically relevant disorder or psychological symptoms [18, 20] or other symptoms which "demand attention" [19] and/or fulfill the criteria for a mental disorder [18, 21]. Regression analyses show that together with other variables (e.g. community/motherly violence, engagement in coping strategies), exposure to war-related traumatic events predict Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms, internalizing problems and prosocial behavior in refugee children and adolescents [22]. Lastly, the results of a meta-analysis reveal pooled estimates of 47% for PTSD, 43% of depressive symptoms indicative of depression and 27% of major anxiety disorder in children and adolescents affected by war [23].

The comparison of refugee/asylum-seeking children and adolescents to norms of typically developing children/normative values [24, 25], children who are from an ethnic minority but not refugees or indigenous white children [26] or children who have not experienced war and flight [27], partially reveal more emotional, behavioral and social problems as well as somatic complaints and impairments in cognitive development in refugee/asylum-seeking children and adolescents than in peers in the comparison groups [24–27].

Parent-child separation due to flight or forced displacement

War, conflict and persecution are one of the most common reasons for parent-child separation [13] and parent-child separation due to war and flight is an adverse experience which can cause long lasting effects on children's and adolescents' mental health [28, 29]. Empirical studies show that unaccompanied refugee/asylum-seeking children and adolescents report having emotional, sleeping or (psycho)somatic problems [30] and score above ((borderline) clinical) cut-off values for various internalizing/emotional and/or externalizing/behavioral problems as well as psychological symptoms [30–32]. These results are confirmed by other studies which show that even after months and years after the separation some of the psychological symptoms and behavioral/externalizing problems remain the same [33–35]. Lastly, the results of Hampton and colleagues [36] demonstrate that in some forced family-separated children and adolescents mental and behavioral problems and psychiatric disorders may even persist after their reunification with their parents.

Regarding the comparison of unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children and adolescents with accompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children and adolescents [37, 38] and/or native peers in the host

country [39], some results indicate that unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children are more likely to have posttraumatic stress symptoms, somatic complaints, emotional/internalizing and/or externalizing symptoms and a probable psychiatric diagnosis [37–39].

Parental conscription and deployment

To our knowledge, there are currently no studies about the consequences of compulsory parental military service on the mental health of their offspring, only on their socioeconomic and behavioral outcomes [40–44]. However, the results drawn from literature regarding voluntary parental deployment show adverse outcomes for children's and adolescents' physical, psychosocial and economic well-being [45–54]. Literature regarding children's and adolescents' mental health shows overall adverse outcomes for children's and adolescents' internalizing and externalizing behavior and their mental health [49, 55–66]. Additionally, one study shows that extra health care visits of children and adolescents for mental health diagnoses are linked to parental deployment [67] and the length and the cumulative number of a parent's deployment predicts increased psychological burden in children and adolescents that often remains even when the deployed parent returns home [49, 57, 60, 61, 67].

Comparative studies demonstrate that minors who experienced parental deployment have more mental health problems than those in civilian, national or community samples [49, 55, 58–61, 63, 67, 68]. However, studies comparing children of recently, currently or ever deployed parents with children of not or never deployed parents show mixed results [28, 57–59, 62, 69]. On the one hand, children of deployed parents show more mental health problems than children of non-deployed parents [28, 57, 58, 69]. On the other hand, there are studies showing no significant differences between the comparison groups but instead clinically significant symptoms in both groups [59, 62].

Conclusion

Among the negative impact of exposure to war, fight and forced displacement as well as parent-child separation due to flight on children's and adolescents' mental health [see 13, 18–39], the adverse experience of parent-child separation due to the conscription of a parent may expose children and adolescents to another stressful situation that bears risks for serious impairments in their mental health. As shown by literature on deployment research, there is evidence that the fear of losing a parent due to serving in war leads to mental health problems in children and adolescents who are not themselves exposed to war [see 28, 49, 55–69]. Therefore, the same has to be assumed for more vulnerable children and adolescents, e.g. those, with their own experiences of

war and forced displacement. Due to the circumstance that war, flight, forced displacement, parental separation, deployment and conscription may not occur individually but rather cumulate with one another and other additional adverse experiences and consequences [see 70–78], it becomes abundantly clear that tailored prevention and intervention programs for war-affected children and adolescents are urgently needed. The separation from a parent due to conscription and associated feelings should be addressed as a topic in prevention and intervention programs as well as in research. This applies not only to Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine but also to all countries that currently face armed conflicts, some of which may not get a lot of media coverage (e.g. Ethiopia, Haiti, Myanmar, Sudan [79]) or those that will experience such unfortunate events in the future. It is also important to consider that in the case of Ukraine, Russia's invasion started already in 2014 and an increase in mental health problems in war affected Ukrainian children and adolescents has already been observed before Russia's invasion in 2022 [see 80]. Therefore, the adverse experiences that followed in the course of the current event (e.g. flight, parental separation) and the associated mental health problems in Ukrainian children and adolescents may have eventually cumulated with psychological distress that followed Russia's previous invasion in 2014.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Karen Schlaegel for the linguistic revision of the manuscript.

Author contributions

EG: Collecting the data, writing the manuscript, editing the manuscript., KE: Collecting the data, writing the manuscript, editing the manuscript., JMF: Initiating the manuscript, providing supervisory support.

Funding

The authors received funding from the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts of Baden-Württemberg by funding research activities in the Competence Area Mental Health Prevention in the Competence Network Preventive Medicine Baden-Württemberg.

Data availability

No datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Not applicable.

Consent for publication

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Competing interests

The authors EG and KE declare no competing interests. In the last five years, JMF received research funding from EU, BMG (Federal Ministry of Health), BMBF (Federal Ministry of Education and Research), BMFSFJ (Federal Ministry of Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth), DFG (German Research Foundation), G-BA Innovation Fund, State Ministries Baden-Württemberg and Saarland, State Foundation Baden-Württemberg, Ingrid & Frank Foundation, Foundation Deutsche Krebshilfe (German Cancer Charity), Auxilium Foundation, Vector Foundation, Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg,

Porticus Foundation; Travel grants, honoraria, sponsorship for conferences and medical educational purposes from APK, Adenauer- und Ebert Foundation, Deutschlandfunk, DFG, DJI, DKSB, Infectopharm, med update, UNICEF, professional associations, universities and federal and state ministries; was a consultant for APK e.V., University Hospital Saarland/State Chancellery, federal and state ministries, Servier. No industry-sponsored lecture series, no shareholdings, no participation in pharmaceutical companies.

Further information

A more detailed version of this commentary may appear in another journal at a later date.

Received: 26 January 2024 / Accepted: 13 March 2024

Published online: 29 March 2024

References

- Funke J. 6 Faktoren unter denen Kinder im Ukraine-Krieg leiden; 2023. Available from <https://www.savethechildren.de/news/6-faktoren-unter-denen-kinder-im-ukraine-krieg-leiden/>. Accessed 25. Jan 2024.
- The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health. Children: innocent victims of war in Ukraine. *Lancet Child Adolesc Health*. 2022;6(5):279. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(22\)00102-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(22)00102-X).
- Bürgin D, Anagnostopoulos D, Vitiello B, Sukale T, Schmid M, Fegert JM. Impact of war and forced displacement on children's mental health-multi-level, needs-oriented, and trauma-informed approaches. *Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2022;31(6):845–53. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-022-01974-z>.
- Bamford J, Fletcher M, Leavey G. Mental Health outcomes of Unaccompanied Refugee minors: a Rapid Review of recent research. *Curr Psychiatry Rep*. 2021;23(8):46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-021-01262-8>.
- Blackmore R, Gray KM, Boyle JA, Fazel M, Ranasinha S, Fitzgerald G, et al. Systematic review and Meta-analysis: the prevalence of Mental illness in child and adolescent refugees and Asylum Seekers. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2020;59(6):705–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2019.11.011>.
- Daniel-Calveras A, Baldaqui N, Baeza I. Mental health of unaccompanied refugee minors in Europe: a systematic review. *Child Abuse Negl*. 2022;133:105865. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2022.105865>.
- Dimitry L. A systematic review on the mental health of children and adolescents in areas of armed conflict in the Middle East. *Child Care Health Dev*. 2012;38(2):153–61. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2011.01246.x>.
- Frounfelker RL, Islam N, Falcone J, Farrar J, Ra C, Antonaccio CM, et al. Living through war: Mental health of children and youth in conflict-affected areas. *Int Rev Red Cross*. 2019;101(911):481–506. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S181638312000017X>.
- Huemer J, Karnik NS, Voelkl-Kernstock S, Granditsch E, Dervic K, Friedrich MH, et al. Mental health issues in unaccompanied refugee minors. *Child Adolesc Psychiatry Ment Health*. 2009;3(1):13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1753-2000-3-13>.
- Lustig SL, Kia-Keating M, Knight WG, Geltman P, Ellis H, Kinzie JD, et al. Review of child and adolescent refugee mental health. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2004;43(1):24–36. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-200401000-00012>.
- Mollica RF, Poole C, Son L, Murray CC, Tor S. Effects of war trauma on Cambodian refugee adolescents' functional health and mental health status. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 1997;36(8):1098–106. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-199708000-00017>.
- Murthy RS, Lakshminarayana R. Mental health consequences of war: a brief review of research findings. *World Psychiatry*. 2006;5(1):25–30. PMC1472271.
- Waddoups AB, Yoshikawa H, Strouf K. Developmental effects of parent-child separation. *Annu Rev Dev Psychol*. 2019;1(1):387–410. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-devpsych-121318-085142>.
- Central Intelligence Agency. Field Listing - Military service age and obligation; n.d. Available from <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/military-service-age-and-obligation/>. Accessed 19 Jan 2024.
- Pieper O. Germany debates reintroducing military conscription; 2023. Available from <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-debates-reintroducing-military-conscription/a-64601831>. Accessed 19 Jan 2024.
- Kadir A, Shenoda S, Goldhagen J. Effects of armed conflict on child health and development: a systematic review. *PLoS ONE*. 2019;14(1):e0210071. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0210071>.
- Alexander J, Boothby N, Wessells M. Education and protection of children and youth affected by armed conflict: an essential link. In: Richmond M, editor. Protecting education from attack: a state-of-the-art review. Paris: UNESCO, Education Sector; 2010. pp. 55–70.
- Betancourt TS, Newnham EA, Layne CM, Kim S, Steinberg AM, Ellis H, et al. Trauma history and psychopathology in war-affected refugee children referred for trauma-related mental health services in the United States. *J Trauma Stress*. 2012;25(6):682–90. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.21749>.
- Goldin S, Hägglöf B, Levin L, Persson LA. Mental health of Bosnian refugee children: a comparison of clinician appraisal with parent, child and teacher reports. *Nord J Psychiatry*. 2008;62(3):204–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08039480801983604>.
- Kandemir H, Karataş H, Çeri V, Solmaz F, Kandemir SB, Solmaz A. Prevalence of war-related adverse events, depression and anxiety among Syrian refugee children settled in Turkey. *Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2018;27(11):1513–7. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-018-1178-0>.
- Scharpf F, Kyaruzi E, Landolt MA, Hecker T. Prevalence and co-existence of morbidity of posttraumatic stress and functional impairment among Burundian refugee children and their parents. *Eur J Psychotraumatol*. 2019;10(1):1676005. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2019.1676005>.
- Scharpf F, Mkinga G, Masath FB, Hecker T. A socio-ecological analysis of risk, protective and promotive factors for the mental health of Burundian refugee children living in refugee camps. *Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2021;30(10):1651–62. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-020-01649-7>.
- Attanayake V, McKay R, Joffres M, Singh S, Burkle F, Mills E. Prevalence of mental disorders among children exposed to war: a systematic review of 7,920 children. *Med Confl Surviv*. 2009;25(1):4–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13623690802568913>.
- Buchmüller T, Lembcke H, Busch J, Kumsta R, Leyendecker B. Exploring Mental Health Status and syndrome patterns among Young Refugee Children in Germany. *Front Psychiatry*. 2018;9:212. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00212>.
- Costa D, Biddle L, Bozorgmehr K. Association between psychosocial functioning, health status and healthcare access of asylum seekers and refugee children: a population-based cross-sectional study in a German federal state. *Child Adolesc Psychiatry Ment Health*. 2021;15(1):59. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-021-00411-4>.
- Fazel M, Stein A. Mental health of refugee children: comparative study. *BMJ*. 2003;327(7407):134. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.327.7407.134>.
- Paardekooper B, de Jong JTVM, Hermanns JMA. The psychological impact of War and the Refugee Situation on South Sudanese Children in Refugee Camps in Northern Uganda: an exploratory study. *Child Psychol Psychiatry*. 1999;40(4):529–36. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-7610.00471>.
- Forrest W, Edwards B, Daraganova G. The intergenerational consequences of war: anxiety, depression, suicidality, and mental health among the children of war veterans. *Int J Epidemiol*. 2018;47(4):1060–7. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyy040>.
- Pesonen A-K, Räikkönen K, Heinonen K, Kajantie E, Forsén T, Eriksson JG. Depressive symptoms in adults separated from their parents as children: a natural experiment during World War II. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2007;166(10):1126–33. <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwm254>.
- Zijlstra AE, Menninga MC, van Os ECC, Rip JA, Knorth EJ, Kalverboer ME. There is no mother to take care of you: Views of Unaccompanied Children on Healthcare, their Mental Health and Rearing Environment. *Residential Treat Child Youth*. 2019;36(2):118–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/088671X.2018.1559118>.
- Sanchez-Cao E, Kramer T, Hodes M. Psychological distress and mental health service contact of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. *Child Care Health Dev*. 2013;39(5):651–9. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2012.01406.x>.
- Vervliet M, Meyer Demott MA, Jakobsen M, Broekaert E, Heir T, Derluyn I. The mental health of unaccompanied refugee minors on arrival in the host country. *Scand J Psychol*. 2014;55(1):33–7. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjop.12094>.
- Bean TM, Eurelings-Bontekoe E, Spinhoven P. Course and predictors of mental health of unaccompanied refugee minors in the Netherlands: one year follow-up. *Soc Sci Med*. 2007;64(6):1204–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2006.11.010>.
- Jensen TK, Skar A-MS, Andersson ES, Birkeland MS. Long-term mental health in unaccompanied refugee minors: pre- and post-flight predictors. *Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2019;28(12):1671–82. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-019-01340-6>.
- Jensen TK, Skåråldsmo EMB, Fjermestad KW. Development of mental health problems - a follow-up study of unaccompanied refugee

- minors. *Child Adolesc Psychiatry Ment Health*. 2014;8:29. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1753-2000-8-29>.
36. Hampton K, Raker E, Habbach H, Camaj Deda L, Heisler M, Mishori R. The psychological effects of forced family separation on asylum-seeking children and parents at the US-Mexico border: a qualitative analysis of medico-legal documents. *PLoS ONE*. 2021;16(11):e0259576. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0259576>.
 37. Hodes M, Jagdev D, Chandra N, Cunniff A. Risk and resilience for psychological distress amongst unaccompanied asylum seeking adolescents. *Child Psychol Psychiatry*. 2008;49(7):723–32. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2008.01912.x>.
 38. Wiese EBP, Burhorst I. The mental health of asylum-seeking and refugee children and adolescents attending a clinic in the Netherlands. *Transcult Psychiatry*. 2007;44(4):596–613. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461507083900>.
 39. Thommesen S, Laghi F, Cerrone C, Baiocco R, Todd BK. Internalizing and externalizing symptoms among unaccompanied refugee and Italian adolescents. *Child Youth Serv Rev*. 2013;35(1):7–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.10.007>.
 40. Goodman S, Isen A, Un-Fortunate, Sons. Effects of the Vietnam draft lottery on the Next Generation's Labor Market. *Am Economic Journal: Appl Econ*. 2020;12(1):182–209. <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20170482>.
 41. Fujiwara T, Koyama Y, Isumi A, Matsuyama Y, Tani Y, Ichida Y, et al. What did you do in the War, daddy? Paternal military conscription during WWII, Economic Hardship and Family Violence in Childhood, and Health in Late Life in Japan. *J Interpers Violence*. 2023;38(13–14):8114–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605231153889>.
 42. Wallin AS, Lundin A, Melin B, Hemmingsson T. Fathers' intelligence measured at age 18–20 years is associated with offspring smoking: linking the Swedish 1969 conscription cohort to the Swedish survey of living conditions. *J Epidemiol Community Health* (1979-). 2016;70(4):396–401. <https://doi.org/10.1136/jech-2015-206149>.
 43. Hemmingsson T, Danielsson A-K, Falkstedt D. Fathers' alcohol consumption and risk of alcohol-related hospitalization in offspring before 60 years of age. *Drugs: Educ Prev Policy*. 2017;24(1):3–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2022.109354>.
 44. Scharf M, Maysseless O. Late adolescent girls' relationships with parents and romantic partner: the distinct role of mothers and fathers. *J Adolesc*. 2008;31(6):837–55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2008.06.012>.
 45. Aronson KR, Perkins DF. Challenges faced by military families: Perceptions of United States Marine Corps School Liaisons. *J Child Fam Stud*. 2013;22(4):516–25. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-012-9605-1>.
 46. Barnes VA, Davis H, Treiber FA. Perceived stress, heart rate, and blood pressure among adolescents with family members deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom. *Mil Med*. 2007;172(1):40–3. <https://doi.org/10.7205/milmed.172.1.40>.
 47. Blamey H, Phillips A, Hess DC, Fear NT. The impact of parental military service on child well-being. *J Military Veteran Family Health*. 2019;5(52):29–69. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jmfvh.2019.0014>.
 48. Card NA, Bosch L, Casper DM, Wiggs CB, Hawkins SA, Schlomer GL, et al. A meta-analytic review of internalizing, externalizing, and academic adjustment among children of deployed military service members. *J Fam Psychol*. 2011;25(4):508–20. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024395>.
 49. Chandra A, Lara-Cinisomo S, Jaycox LH, Tanielian T, Burns RM, Ruder T, et al. Children on the homefront: the experience of children from military families. *Pediatrics*. 2010;125(1):16–25. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2009-1180>.
 50. Huebner AJ, Mancini JA, Wilcox RM, Grass SR, Grass GA. Parental Deployment and Youth in Military Families: Exploring Uncertainty and Ambiguous Loss*. *Family Relations*. 2007; 56(2):112–22. Available from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2007.00445.x>. Accessed 25 Jan 2024.
 51. Huebner AJ, Mancini JA, the Military Family Research Institute and Department of Defense Quality of Life Office June 30. Adjustments among Adolescents in Military Families. When a Parent Is Deployed: Final Report to, 2005; 2005 Jun 30. Available from <https://www.mfri.purdue.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Adjustments-Among-Adolescents.pdf>. Accessed 25 Jan 2024.
 52. Pfefferbaum B, Houston JB, Sherman MD, Melson AG. Children of National Guard Troops Deployed in the Global War on Terrorism. *J Loss Trauma*. 2011;16(4):291–305. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2010.519293>.
 53. Skomorovsky A, Bullock A. The Impact of Deployment on Children from Canadian Military families. *Armed Forces Soc*. 2017;43(4):654–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X16670691>.
 54. Swedean SK, Gonzales MV, Zickefoose BA, Bush AC, Davis JM, Elrod DC, et al. Recurrent headache in military-dependent children and the impact of parent deployment. *Mil Med*. 2013;178(3):274–8. <https://doi.org/10.7205/MILMED-D-12-00171>.
 55. Acion L, Ramirez MR, Jorge RE, Arndt S. Increased risk of alcohol and drug use among children from deployed military families. *Addiction* (Abingdon England). 2013;108(8):1418–25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/add.12161>.
 56. Allen ES, Rhoades GK, Stanley SM, Markman HJ. Hitting home: relationships between recent deployment, posttraumatic stress symptoms, and marital functioning for Army couples. *J Fam Psychol*. 2010;24(3):280–8. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019405>.
 57. Barker LH, Berry KD. Developmental issues impacting military families with young children during single and multiple deployments. *Mil Med*. 2009;174(10):1033–40. <https://doi.org/10.7205/milmed-d-04-1108>.
 58. Cunitz K, Dölitzsch C, Kösters M, Willmund G-D, Zimmermann P, Bühler AH, et al. Parental military deployment as risk factor for children's mental health: a meta-analytical review. *Child Adolesc Psychiatry Ment Health*. 2019;13:26. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-019-0287-y>.
 59. Fairbank JA, Briggs EC, Lee RC, Corry NH, Pflieger JC, Gerrity ET, et al. Mental Health of Children of Deployed and Nondeployed US Military Service members: the Millennium Cohort Family Study. *J Dev Behav Pediatr*. 2018;39(9):683–92. <https://doi.org/10.1097/DBP.0000000000000606>.
 60. Lester P, Peterson K, Reeves J, Knauss L, Glover D, Mogil C, et al. The long war and parental Combat Deployment: effects on Military Children and At-Home spouses. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2010;49(4):69–70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2010.01.003>.
 61. Mansfield AJ, Kaufman JS, Engel CC, Gaynes BN. Deployment and mental health diagnoses among children of US Army personnel. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*. 2011;165(11):999–1005. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archpediatrics.2011.123>.
 62. Pexton S, Farrants J, Yule W. The impact of fathers' military deployment on child adjustment. The support needs of primary school children and their families separated during active military service: a pilot study. *Clin Child Psychol Psychiatry*. 2018;23(1):110–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104517724494>.
 63. Reed SC, Bell JF, Edwards TC. Adolescent well-being in Washington state military families. *Am J Public Health*. 2011;101(9):1676–82. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2011.300165>.
 64. Rodriguez AJ, Margolin G. Military service absences and family members' mental health: a timeline followback assessment. *J Fam Psychol*. 2015;29(4):642–8. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000102>.
 65. Snyder J, Gewirtz A, Schrepferman L, Gird SR, Quattlebaum J, Pauline MR, et al. Parent-child relationship quality and family transmission of parent post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and child externalizing and internalizing symptoms following fathers' exposure to combat trauma. *Dev Psychopathol*. 2016;28(4pt1):947–69. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S095457941600064X>.
 66. Trautmann J, Alhusen J, Gross D. Impact of deployment on military families with young children: a systematic review. *Nurs Outlook*. 2015;63(6):656–79. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2015.06.002>.
 67. Hisle-Gorman E, Harrington D, Nylund CM, Tercyak KP, Anthony BJ, Gorman GH. Impact of parents' wartime military deployment and injury on young children's safety and mental health. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2015;54(4):294–301. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2014.12.017>.
 68. Chartrand MM, Frank DA, White LF, Shope TR. Effect of parents' wartime deployment on the behavior of young children in military families. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*. 2008;162(11):1009–14. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archpedi.162.11.1009>.
 69. Jensen PS, Martin D, Watanabe H. Children's response to parental separation during operation desert storm. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 1996;35(4):433–41. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-199604000-00009>.
 70. UNICEF. Machel study 10-Year strategic review: Children and conflict in a changing world. New York/N.Y.: UNICEF. 2009. Available from https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/publications/MachelStudy-10YearStrategicReview_en.pdf. Accessed 25 Jan 2024.
 71. Zeit Online. Ukraine-Krieg: Internationaler Strafgerichtshof erlässt Haftbefehl gegen Putin. *Die Zeit* 2023 Mar 17. Available from <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2023-03/internationaler-strafergerichtshof-erlaesst-haftbefehl-gegen-putin>. Accessed 16 Aug 2023.
 72. Buckley-Zistel S, Krause U, Loeper L. Sexuelle und geschlechterbasierte Gewalt an Frauen in kriegsbedingten Flüchtlingslagern. Ein Literaturüberblick. *PERIPHERIE*. 2014; 34(133):71–89. Available from <https://www.budrich-journals.de/index.php/peripherie/article/view/22463>. Accessed 25 Jan 2024.

73. UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe. Kinder auf der Flucht: Flüchtlingskinder. Available from <https://www.uno-fluechtlingshilfe.de/hilfe-weltweit/fluechtlingschutz/fluechtlingskinder>. Accessed 25 Jan 2024.
74. Gibbs DA, Martin SL, Kupper LL, Johnson RE. Child maltreatment in enlisted soldiers' families during combat-related deployments. *JAMA*. 2007;298(5):528–35. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.298.5.528>.
75. McCarthy RJ, Rabenhorst MM, Thomsen CJ, Milner JS, Travis WJ, Copeland CW, et al. Child maltreatment among civilian parents before, during, and after deployment in United States Air Force families. *Psychol Violence*. 2015;5(1):26–34. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035433>.
76. McCarroll JE, Fan Z, Newby JH, Ursano RJ. Trends in US Army child maltreatment reports: 1990–2004. *Child Abuse Rev*. 2008;17(2):108–18. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.986>.
77. Rentz ED, Marshall SW, Loomis D, Casteel C, Martin SL, Gibbs DA. Effect of deployment on the occurrence of child maltreatment in military and nonmilitary families. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2007;165(10):1199–206. <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwm008>.
78. Thomsen CJ, Rabenhorst MM, McCarthy RJ, Milner JS, Travis WJ, Foster RE, et al. Child maltreatment before and after combat-related deployment among active-duty United States Air Force maltreating parents. *Psychol Violence*. 2014;4(2):143–55. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031766>.
79. International Crisis Group. 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2024: More leaders are pursuing their ends militarily. More believe they can get away with it. 2024. Available from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/10-conflicts-watch-2024>. Accessed 15. Feb 2024.
80. Osokina O, Silwal S, Bohdavova T, Hodes M, Sourander A, Skokauskas N. Impact of the Russian Invasion on Mental Health of adolescents in Ukraine. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2023;62(3):335–43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2022.07.845>.

Publisher's Note

Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.