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Psychosocial aspects of participation of the Polish armed forces on combat missions

Beata Karakiewicz, Beata Rozmarynowska, Monika Paszkiewicz and Paulina Zabielska
Pomeranian Medical University, Poland

Introduction: The military service of Polish soldiers on missions abroad began in 1953. Many years of experience of the Polish army as well as the armed forces of other countries show that being in a mission area has a significant impact on soldiers' mental health. Soldiers experience problems with anxiety disorders, depression, post-traumatic stress, which is associated with a difficult return to family life. The aim of the paper was to analyze psychosocial aspects of participation of the Polish Armed Forces in combat missions outside the country.

Material & Methods: The study involved a group of 102 soldiers. All subjects are veterans of missions outside Poland. The research method was the diagnostic survey method. Three standardized research tools were used: The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), NEO-FFI Personality Inventory, Beck's Depression Scale, and the author's questionnaire.

Results: The studies have shown relationships between the level of anxiety in soldiers - veterans of missions abroad, and strong battlefield stressors to the action of which they had been subjected, and their family situation and non-institutional methods of psychological support they had received during their stay in the mission area. During the studies, a factor was distinguished that contributes to the feeling of incomprehension of soldiers by their relatives after returning home.

Conclusions: A higher level of anxiety is observed in soldiers who had experienced life-threatening situations during their missions. These persons should be under special supervision of a psychologist and a team of Rapid Psychological Help, which includes a nurse. Having children is a factor that increases the level of anxiety in veterans on missions abroad. Regular contact with families left behind in the country is associated with a lower sense of fear in soldiers.

Biography

Beata Karakiewicz is the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin for the term 2012-2020. She has been the Head of the Department and Unit of Public Health since 2005. Her main point of interest in research is the issues concerning Public Health and Environmental Medicine. She is the author of many publications touching on the problems of disabled people - both physically and mentally, the chronically ill, people addicted to Psychoactive Drugs and HIV-positive people.

beata.karakiewicz@pum.edu.pl

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