

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND ATTEMPTS IN (EX-) MILITARY PERSONNEL: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW & META-ANALYSIS

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AIM

To assess the strength of the associations between the core types of childhood adversities and suicidal thoughts and attempts in both active military personnel and veterans.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Adverse Childhood Experiences or **Childhood Adversities** (ACEs) refer to traumatic events experienced before 18, including abuse (sexual, physical, emotional), neglect (physical, emotional), and household dysfunction (domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness, divorce, incarceration).

The rates of suicide **deaths** exceed 800,000 people each year globally.

This means that almost **1 individual** takes his or her own life every **40 seconds**.

Suicide is a **preventable** form of death.

THE GAP

Focusing on armed forces personnel is crucial for two main reasons.

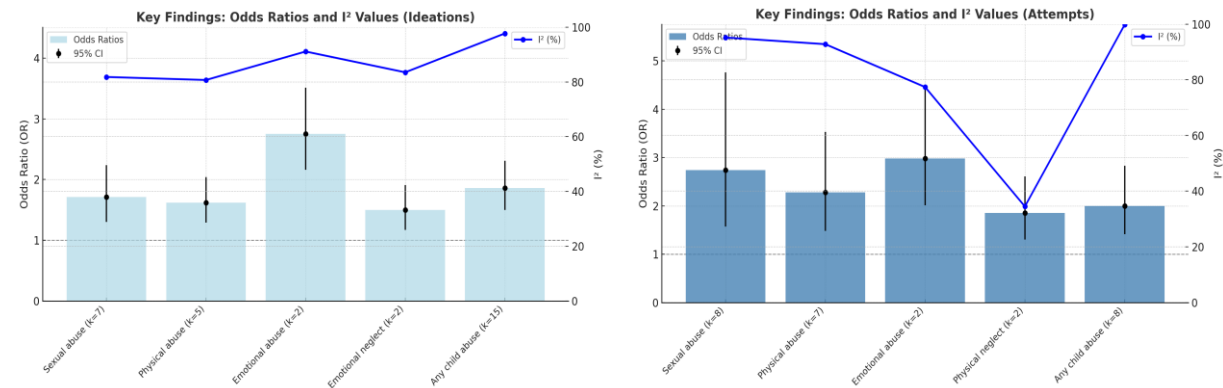
Their healthcare needs are **complex** and strongly linked to their unique experiences during military service.

The **prevalence** of ACEs among military personnel is considerably higher than in the general population.

METHODS

We conducted extensive searches across Medline, PsycInfo, and Embase databases from database inception to June 2024. Studies i) examining childhood trauma exposure before age 18, ii) Focusing on military personnel: active or veterans, iii) Using quantitative designs, and iv) published in peer-reviewed journals in English were included.

RESULTS



DISCUSSION

ACEs substantially increase the likelihood of suicidal thoughts and attempts in military personnel.

Gap: Limited understanding of how ACEs contribute to suicidal ideation and attempts over time.

Key messages: i) To prioritise therapies tailored for military personnel who have experienced ACEs, and ii) To Integrate ACEs' screening and trauma-focused therapies into veteran healthcare systems.

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Addressing the Complex and Enduring Impact of Childhood Trauma in Diverse Communities

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