

Military Strain And Prescription Drug Misuse

Military Deviance

With few exceptions, members of the military tend to report higher rates of problematic alcohol use, tobacco use, intimate partner violence (IPV), and prescription drug abuse than their civilian counterparts (Ames and Cunradi, 2018; Bondurant and Wedge, 2009; Department of Defense, 2008; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2013, Klein, 2015).

Sources of Strain

- Military Culture (Masculinity Strain)
- Ex. Being in the military means you can't show emotion.
- Military Structure (Chain of Command Strain)
- Ex. Moving to a new base/deploying.
- Combination of Culture and Structure in the form of Lack of Control
- Ex. Disagreeing with orders from superiors.

Misuse Rates

- In 2008, 11 percent of service members reported misusing prescription drugs, up from 2% in 2002 and 4% in 2005.
- In 2008, 20% of military personnel reported binge drinking every week in the past month; the rate was considerably higher—27%—among those with high combat exposure.
- The 2010 report of the Army Suicide Prevention Task Force found that 29% of active duty Army suicides from fiscal year (FY) 2005 to FY 2009 involved alcohol or drug use; and in 2009, prescription drugs were involved in almost on- third of them.

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics of the Sample Encompassing Current and Former Members of the U.S. Military (n = 74)

	Mean	SD	Minimum Value	Maximum Value
Dependent Measure				
Prescription Drug Abuse on Duty	0.227	0.405	0	1
Sources of Strain				
Masculinity	8.459	2.971	4	16
Chain of Command	10.891	3.462	5	20
Lack of Control	6.307	2.480	3	12
Negative Affect				
Anger	8.775	4.547	5	24
Anxiety	5.617	3.040	3	15
Additional Control Measures				
Differentiation	1.784	0.727	1	4
Combat	0.817	0.389	0	1
Active	0.577	0.483	0	1
Age (years)	31.356	12.51	18	70
Marines	0.368	0.485	0	1

Table 2.

Logistic Regression Models Assess Prescription Drug Abuse While on Duty (n = 74)

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
Strain				
Masculinity	0.621	0.290*	0.394	0.199*
Chain of Command	0.047	0.151	0.128	0.239
Lack of Control	0.329	0.170*	0.258	0.181
Negative Affect				
Anger	-	-	0.198	0.112+
Anxiety	-	-	0.338	0.202+
Demographic Controls				
Differentiation	0.082	0.546	1.020	0.837
Active	-0.617	1.571	-0.359	2.200
Age (years)	0.037	0.039	0.030	0.076
Combat	-1.495	1.272	-2.527	2.343
Marines	1.446	1.239	1.918	2.100
Chi-Square	19.35*		28.44**	
Pseudo R2	0.322		0.504	

+ p<.10, *p<.05

Coef. = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error

Results of Study

- Military members who reported misusing prescription drugs while on duty reported higher rates of masculinity strain, chain of command strain, and lack of control strain.
- Military members who reported misusing prescription drugs also reported higher levels of temper/anger issues and anxiety than those who did not.
- Military members who experience masculinity strain are associated with a 96% increase in the odds of prescription drug misuse.
- Military members who experience lack of control strain are associated with a 39% increase in the odds of prescription drug misuse.

Sources

- Ames, Genevieve and Carol Cunradi. 2018. "Alcohol Use and Preventing Alcohol-Related Problems Among Young Adults in the Military." *National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism*. Available at: <https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh284/252-257.htm>
- Bondurant Stewart and Roberta Wedge. 2009. "Combating Tobacco use in Military and Veteran Populations." Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK215338/>
- Department of Defense. 2008. "2008 Department of Defense Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Active Duty Military Personnel." Retrieved from: http://prhome.defense.gov/Portals/52/Documents/RFM/Readiness/DDR/Docs/2009_09%202008%20DoD%20Survey%20of%20Health%20Related%20Behaviors%20Among%20Active%20Duty%20Military%20Personnel.pdf
- Klein, Andrew R. 2015. "Practical Implications of Current Domestic Violence Research for Probation Officers and Administrations." Available at: https://www.bwjp.org/assets/documents/pdfs/practical_implications_of_current_domestic_violence_research_for_probation_officers_and_administrations.pdf
- National Institute on Drug Abuse. 2013. "Substance Abuse in the Military." Retrieved March 29, 2018, from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/substance-abuse-in-military>.