

Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: Domestic violence and abuse among military spouses and partners: impact of military life and culture, perceptions of support available and barriers to seeking help. **Ethical Approval:** HR-17/18-5356

Help us help you!**Invitation to Take Part**

We would like to invite you to take part in a telephone interview study. Before you decide, we would like you to understand why the study is being done and what it would involve for you. This information sheet tells you the purpose of this study and what will happen if you take part, and gives you detailed information about the conduct of the study. Please feel free to contact us using the details at the bottom of the sheet if there is anything that is not clear.

What is the Purpose of the Research?

Military life can be stressful for service personnel, their partners and families leading to relationship problems. Some stresses are unique to the military and some are not. Additional stresses can arise after service personnel leave the military. Sometimes these stresses can lead to problems in relationships such as arguments, breakdown in communication, controlling behaviour, verbal aggression, and in some cases aggression/violence. The UK Armed Forces and community services are trying to provide more support to partners and families. In order to do this, a better understanding of the impact of military life on relationships is needed.

We are seeking a better understanding of:

- the impact that military service has on relationships
- the problems that can arise
- civilians partners perspectives on the supports available, and attitudes to help-seeking for problems within relationships.

We would like to interview civilian partners of military personnel in the UK Armed forces from all three service branches, ex-service personnel, all genders.

Who is Doing This Research?

The King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR) is an academic research team at King's College London. KCMHR has been conducting research into issues relevant to current and former members of the UK Armed Forces and their families since 1996. KCMHR is independent of the Ministry of Defence.

Why Have I Been Invited to Take Part?

We are inviting the following people to take part:

Civilian partners of UK Armed Forces members (or ex-members) who have been victims of or who have survived domestic abuse. This includes controlling behaviour, verbal aggression and threats to harm as well as physical and sexual violence.

Do I Have to Take Part?

No. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. If you agree to take part, we will then ask you to sign a consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. If you wish, you can let other people know you are taking part.

What Will I Be Asked to Do?

We will arrange a time for a telephone interview with you. The interview time will vary depending on how much participants have to say, but it should take no longer than 45 minutes. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to. You may take a break or terminate the interview at any time. Your responses to our interview questions will remain confidential, unless you tell us something which suggests that you or someone else may be at risk of harm. In such cases it may be necessary, following consultation with you, to inform others.

You will be asked questions about the quality of your relationship(s). We would like to identify whether any negative behaviours arose in the relationship, such as controlling behaviour, verbal aggression, or physical violence. However you will not be asked about these experiences in detail. We particularly like to know whether you perceive aspects of your partner's/ex-partner's military life to have impacted on your relationship(s), (e.g., family relocations/separations, deployment, combat exposure, mental health problems, drinking culture, transition in/out of military service) and the risk of those negative behaviours occurring. Finally, we will ask you some questions about your experience of seeking help.

Some of your answers may be particularly interesting and the interviewer may want to quote them in the final report; if you do not agree to this, please tell the interviewer or tick the 'No' box on the consent form. Results will be reported anonymously, meaning that you or your family will not be identifiable from your responses.

What are the Benefits of Taking Part?

You may find it helpful to have the opportunity to talk about problems in relationships during or after military service. You will be provided with information on a range of services and resources for help and support. The information you provide will help inform the improvement of support services for military families both within the military and after they leave.

What are the Possible Disadvantages and Risks of Taking Part?

Some of the questions may bring up distressing thoughts or feelings. You can take your time answering and can choose not to answer questions, have a break, or terminate the interview at any time. If we need to we can arrange to continue the interview another time. We can provide details of sources of support which you may find helpful and you can speak to our clinician too if that would be helpful. At the beginning of the interview we will ask you if there is anyone you would like us to contact for support for you if you become distressed. Your wellbeing will always be our priority. We will talk to you about safe ways to contact you, and about whether it is safe for you to keep information about the study in your home.

Can I Withdraw from the Research and What Will Happen If I Withdraw?

Yes, at any time and without giving a reason. You can change your mind about taking part, without giving a reason, at any time before, during, or after, the interview, up until 2 weeks after the interview. If you do change your mind or have any questions after the interview, please contact the researcher. Data provided up to the point of withdrawal will be disposed of.

Are There Any Expenses and Payments Which I Will Get?

We offer £25 per interview in compensation for your time. Once you have completed the telephone interview, we will arrange payment.

Whom Do I Contact If I Have Any Questions?

If you have a concern/question about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions. Please refer to the contact details at the bottom of the participant information sheet.

Whom Do I Contact If I Have a Complaint?

If this study has harmed you in any way, you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

Research Ethics Office:

Chair of the PNM RESC
Franklin Wilkins Building, Waterloo Bridge Wing, Waterloo Road
London SE1 9NH [Tel: 020 7848 4077 // Email: pnm@kcl.ac.uk]

Will My Information Be Kept Confidential?

If you do decide to participate, we will follow ethical and legal practice and all information you provide in the interviews will be strictly confidential and stored securely. The only exception to this is if you tell us information leading to concern during the interview which suggests a risk of death (including suicide) or serious harm to yourself or to others. This includes if you tell us information which suggests a risk of harm to children. If this happens, we may have to breach your confidentiality and inform the service most appropriate in the circumstances.

All audio recordings of interviews will be destroyed after they have been transcribed and checked for accuracy. Only the research team will have access to your data and it will not be shared with anyone else. Any reports arising from this study will be anonymised and will not include your name or details that could lead to you (or your family) being identified.

Who is Organising and Funding the Research?

The research is organised by King's College London and funded by Forces in Mind Trust.

Who Has Reviewed the Study?

This study has been reviewed by the College Research Ethics Committee (CREC), King's College London.

Further Information and Contact Details

Dr Deirdre MacManus (Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist and Senior Clinical Lecturer), Filipa Alves-Costa (Research Associate) and/or Anna Taylor (Research Assistant)



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Telephone: [020 7848 0225](tel:02078480225)

Compliance with the Declaration of Helsinki

This study complies, and at all times will comply, with the Declaration of Helsinki ¹ as adopted at the 64th WMA General Assembly at Fortaleza, Brazil in October 2013.

¹ World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki [revised October 2013]. Recommendations Guiding Medical Doctors in Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects. 64th WMA General Assembly, Fortaleza (Brazil).