

**The State of Women Veterans' Health Research: Results of a Systematic Literature Review
Evidence Tables**

Table 1c. Evidence Table of Stress of military life: <i>Sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault</i>						
Author	Women veteran specific?	Sample characteristics	Sample size [N]	Design	Main measures	Description
Coyle, 1996 (36)	Yes	Women veterans receiving care at the Baltimore VAMC in the last six months of 1994	429	All Other Observational	Prevalence of different forms of abuse (physical abuse, sexual abuse, rape) time when abuse occurred	68% of veteran users reported at least one form of victimization; and abuse was associated with lower age at the time of the survey, history of separation or divorce, higher education, and being enlisted rather than being an officer. One third of women reported that their abuse occurred on active duty only and 58% reported that at least some occurred while on active duty.
Fontana, 1998 (37)	Yes	Sample of women treated in a VA clinical program for women with stress disorders (4 sites) between 5/94 and 1/97	327	Observ. Study- Assess risk or prognosis	Variables related to social support (education, age entered military, ethnicity, service era, premilitary sexual stress) and exposure to stress - particularly duty-related stress or sexual stress experienced during military service	63% reported physical sexual harassment during military service and 43% reported rape or attempted rape. Duty-related and sexual stress were associated with development of PTSD but sexual stress was 4 times as influential as duty-related stress.

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Frayne, 1999 (38)	Yes	National random sample of women veterans using VA outpatient services between 7/94 and 7/95	3632	Observ. Study- Assess risk or prognosis	History of sexual assault while in the military; current physical or medical conditions	23% reported a history of sexual assault while in the military and this was associated with current physical symptoms and medical conditions in every domain assessed (reproductive/gynecological, abnormal menses, urological, neurological/rheumatological, gastrointestinal, pulmonary, cardiovascular, other
Hankin, 1999 (39)	Yes	National sample of women veterans using VA outpatient services between 7/94 and 7/95 (same sample and study as #114)	3632	Observ. Study- Assess risk or prognosis	History of sexual assault while in the military; current symptoms of depression and alcohol abuse	23% reported a history of sexual assault while in the military and prevalence of current depression was 3 times higher and for current alcohol abuse 2 times higher among those reporting military sexual assault versus those without this experience.
Butterfield, 1998 (40)	Yes	Sample of women using the women's health clinic at the Durham VAMC from 7/94-6/97	632 consecutive women	Descriptive Study	Trauma history including childhood sexual trauma, rape and battering; mental disorder symptoms	40% of the sample had at least one type of trauma and half had multiple traumas. 33% of rapes and 22% of battering occurred during military service. Increasing levels of trauma were associated with a higher prevalence of all mental disorder symptoms

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Davis, 1999 (41)	Yes	Sample of female veterans participating in outpatient PTSD and/or substance abuse treatment at one VAMC	28 women	Descriptive Study	Demographic information including age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, military service, past psychiatric/substance treatment, years since assault; General Severity Index of the Brief Symptom Index; Alcohol screening (AUDIT); the Life Stressor Checklist; health status	Most of women included in study had been sexually abused with 63% meeting criteria for PTSD. 89% of women who had abused substances also reported a history of sexual abuse. Most of the sexual abuse occurred during military service.
Wing, 1998 (42)	Yes	Women veterans in northeastern Oklahoma being treated in VA mental health clinics for PTSD resulting from service-related sexual abuse; 8/97 through 4/98	16	Qualitative Research	Open-ended interview to determine factors contributing to participants' trauma, decision to seek assistance and recovery	Sexually abused women veterans gained an identity that was autonomous and free of unexplained fear through the social process of "transforming self", a five-stage process that includes reacting to triggers, seeking validation, sorting through confusion, becoming intentional and affirming self.

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Harned, 2002 (43)	Yes	3 samples: Active-duty military women posted at two US military installations; active-duty military men from the same installations; non-military women involved in a class action sexual harassment lawsuit	472 active-duty military women; 254 active-duty military men; 1853 women in the class action lawsuit	Observ. Study- Assess risk or prognosis	Survey measures evaluating unwanted sex-related experiences in the workplace, eating disorder symptoms, psychological distress, job satisfaction and health status	For both samples of women, sexual harassment was independently associated with eating disorder symptoms, though the effect was small. The effect was mediated by psychological distress, self-esteem and self-blame and persisted when controlling for sexual assault. There was no association between sexual harassment and eating disorder symptoms in men.
Read, 1997 (44)	Yes	Sample of women veterans and service-eligible non-veterans from 2 outpatient women's health clinics between 10/94 and 11/95	100 veterans; 8 non-veterans	Observ. Study – Assess risk and prognosis	Women Veterans' Demographic Inventory – demographic variables, mental health care, medical complaints; Women Veterans Trauma Screen – lifetime traumatic events and whether occurred in military; Lifestyle Questionnaire – substance use, eating, stress and coping	69% of the sample reported some traumatic event with 33% reporting sexual assault. 1/3 of these victims were assaulted in the military. Women with substance use symptoms, eating disturbance symptoms, and more general stress had higher rates of lifetime trauma.

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DeRoma, 2003 (45)	Yes	Sample of women veterans schedule in the gyn clinic at the Biloxi VAMC, 1994	336 women	All Other Observational	Patient demographics, perceived social support, perceived stress, depression, anxiety, history of childhood abuse, history of military or civilian sexual harassment or assault; Impact of Events Scale	75% of the sample had experienced some form of sexual harassment and 38% had experienced rape during their lifetime. 42% had been victims of childhood sexual abuse. Those who had experienced military or civilian and military rape had lower scores for perceived social support, and higher depression and anxiety ratings.
Harned, 2002 (46)	Yes	Stratified random sample of active military women, 1995 DOD Gender Issues Survey	22,372 military women	Observ. Study – Assess risk and prognosis	Sexual harassment in the military, sexual assault in the military, sociocultural power (age, ethnicity, education, marital status), organizational power (pay grade, years of active duty service), organizational climate (perceptions of military efforts related to sexual harassment), job gender context, job satisfaction, psychological well-being, health satisfaction	4.2% reported sexual assault by workplace personnel, 72% reported other types of sexual harassment and 23% reported no sexual harassment or assault. Assaults typically occurred at the military installation but after hours and not at work; sexual harassment typically occurred at the military installation and during duty hours at the workplace. Sexual assault was associated with less sociocultural and organizational power. Sexual assault victims have lower psychological well-being, health satisfaction, work satisfaction and coworker satisfaction.

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Chang, 2001 (47)	Yes	Random sample of women receiving outpatient care at VA facilities from 7/94 – 7/95	3543 women veterans	Observ. Study – Assess risk and prognosis	Military sexual assault history, religiosity, mental health status and current depressive symptoms, social support scale	23% of the sample reported experiencing military sexual assault. Among those with a history of military sexual assault, those who attend religious services more often have better mental health and are less likely to endorse depressive symptoms.
Sadler, 2000 (48)	Yes	National random sample of women veterans from Vietnam and subsequent eras, November 1996 – May 1997	640 women veterans	Observ. Study – Assess risk and prognosis	Demographic information, violence history during military service, current medical and occupational status, military environment, health status (SF-36)	48% of survey respondents reported some type of physical or sexual victimization during military service. 12% reported rape solely during military service and 14% were raped before and during military service. Women who were subjected to violence during military service had significantly worse health status, with scores lowest for those who experienced both physical assault and rape.
Sadler, 2001 (49)	Yes	Sample of women veterans from Vietnam, post-Vietnam and Persian Gulf War era interviewed from 11/96 - 5/97	537 women veterans	Observ. Study – Assess risk and prognosis	Sociodemographic and environmental factors; physical assault, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment experiences while in the military	79% reported sexual harassment during military service; 54% unwanted sexual contact; 23% experienced nonfatal physical assault. Risk factors for assault included sexual harassment allowed by officers, and unwanted sexual advances while on duty and in sleeping quarters.

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Wolfe, 1998 (50)	Yes	Ft. Devens Operation Desert Storm (ODS) Reunion Survey of Persian Gulf female Veterans 5 days after returning from the Gulf, April – July 1991	160 women who returned the sexual harassment questionnaire	Observ. Study – Assess risk and prognosis	Demographic characteristics; combat exposure and other deployment stressors; coping style; sexual assault or harassment; PTSD symptomatology; intervening life events; support and cohesion;	Evaluated the association between sexual harassment during Gulf War duty and PTSD symptomatology at 18-24 months following return. 7.3% of subjects experienced sexual assault, 33.1% physical sexual harassment, 66.2% verbal sexual harassment and 30.2% no sexual harassment. Women who were sexually assaulted had significantly higher PTSD symptomatology than all other groups of women with differences greatest when compared to women with no harassment. Intervening life events seems to mediate this increased risk.
Wing, 1999 (51)	Yes	Women with PTSD related to military sexual trauma	10 women	Qualitative Research	Understand about addiction in these traumatized patients – when it started, why the women used chemicals, how they recovered from addiction	Chemicals were used to “escape” bad memories and life problems but impaired coping mechanisms.

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Sadler, 2003 (52)	Yes	Sample of women veterans from Vietnam, post-Vietnam and Persian Gulf War era interviewed from 11/96 - 5/97	558 women veterans	Observ. Study – Assess risk and prognosis	Sociodemographic and environmental factors; physical assault, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment experiences while in the military and prior to military service	Assessed military environmental factors associated with rape occurring in the military. 28% of respondents reported rape and factors associated with increased likelihood of rape were sexual harassment allowed by officers, and unwanted sexual advances while on duty and in sleeping quarters. Victims of rape entered the military at a younger age, were discharged at younger ages, were more likely to be enlisted rank and were less likely to have completed college.
Skinner, 2000 (53)	Yes	VA Women's' Health Project - national sample of women using outpatient VA from 7/94 - 7/95	3632 women veterans	Observ. Study – Assess risk and prognosis	Health status, military experiences, medical conditions, use of health care services, social support, life experiences	Reports the prevalence of military sexual harassment and assault and compares health status between assaulted and non-assaulted women veterans. 55% of veterans reported sexual harassment while in the military and 23% reported sexual assault. Women who were assaulted were more likely to have negative ratings of their military service and scored worse on health status.
Sadler, 2004 (54)	Yes	Historical cohort of women veterans from different war eras derived from the registries of five comprehensive women's health centers, interviewed from 11/96 – 5/97	558 women veterans	Observ. Study – Assess risk and prognosis	Sociodemographic characteristics, military experiences, current medical and mental health conditions, outpatient utilization, health status	Evaluated health status and healthcare utilization in women with and without histories of sexual assault. 41% of the women had experienced either rape or physical assault in their lifetimes. Women who had multiple traumas during military service had greater numbers of physician visits than singly victimized or non-victimized women. Multiply traumatized women also had the poorest health status compared to the other groups.

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Suris, 2004 (55)	Yes	Women veterans using a medical and/or mental health clinic in the VA North Texas Health Care System, interviewed between 1997 and 2000	270 women veterans	Observ. Study – Assess risk and prognosis	Sexual harassment, sexual assault experiences; PTSD symptoms, utilization of VA care, health care costs	Evaluates the impact of military, civilian adult and childhood sexual assault on the likelihood of developing PTSD; and the association of military sexual assault to service utilization and health care costs. Women with a history of sexual assault were 5 times more likely to have PTSD and military sexual assault was associated with a >9-times increased risk of PTSD. A history of sexual assault was associated with higher utilization and cost of care, but this was primarily because of higher utilization by women with histories of civilian sexual trauma.
Skinner, 2000 (56)	Yes	National sample of female veterans with at least one ambulatory visit between 7/94 and 7/95.	3632 women veterans	Observ. Study- Assess risk or prognosis	Military sexual harassment and sexual assault, sociodemographic characteristics, military experiences, health status (SF-36)	Evaluates the prevalence of military sexual harassment or assault and finds that 55% of the sample had experienced sexual harassment and 23% military sexual assault. Women with a history of harassment or assault scored worse on every scale of the SF-36.