

SAVORING POSITIVE EXPERIENCES MAY IMPROVE NIGHTLY SLEEP IN MILITARY COUPLES

U.S. Department of Defense, Award No. W81XWH-13-2-0020

BACKGROUND

- Close relationships with others can improve physical health. For example, when couples discuss their daily events with each other and engage in supportive interactions, they report sleeping better at night.
- This paper examines how military veterans' and their romantic partners' daily interactions may help improve their nightly sleep.

RESEARCH CONDUCTED

- Military veterans (including those separated from active duty and currently serving National Guard and Reservists) and their romantic partners completed daily surveys over the course of a month (32 days), reporting on their daily experiences, health, and well-being.

RESULTS

- Military couples reported that when they helped their partner to savor their positive experiences, they felt closer to their partner and less lonely, which in turn helped them sleep better at night. Specifically:
 - Veterans and spouses who reported increased support for their partner's positive experiences also reported increased intimacy, less loneliness, and increased sleep quality and duration
 - Veteran positive event support predicted their spouses' experience of intimacy and reduced loneliness and subsequent sleep
 - Increased intimacy and reduced loneliness were identified as ways through which savoring positive experiences may increase nightly sleep.

IMPORTANCE

- Sleep is a persistent health problem for military personnel that lasts long after deployment. Further, military spouses similarly report problematic sleeping patterns.
- Military couples may improve their sleep through positive daily interactions such as savoring positive events, which can increase feelings of intimacy and reduce feelings of loneliness.



Summary based on the following paper:

Arpin, S. N., Starkey, A. R., Mohr, C. D., Greenhalgh, A.D., & Hammer, L. (2018). "A well spent day brings happy sleep": Dyadic study of capitalization support in military-connected couples. *Journal of Family Psychology* 32(7). 975-985