

# MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA AMONG WOMEN VETERANS: THE BUFFERING EFFECT OF COWORKER SUPPORT

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## BACKGROUND

Prior studies have demonstrated the impact of military sexual trauma (MST) on health and well-being. Yet, little research has focused on identifying protective factors for women experiencing MST.

This study examines the impact of harassment-only MST and assault MST on PTSD symptoms and social functional impairment in a sample of women Veterans employed in the civilian workforce.

## RESEARCH CONDUCTED

A total of 83 women Veterans completed the survey questions at baseline, as compared to 60 at time 2 and 67 at time 3.

The effects of MST were examined at three different time points over a period of 9 months.

## RESULTS

- MST that included both harassment and assault was associated with significantly higher levels of PTSD symptoms and social functional impairment across three different time points for women Veterans employed in civilian jobs
- Coworker support was found to buffer against these negative outcomes experienced by women who reported assault MST

## IMPORTANCE

- The findings suggest that MST can exacerbate PTSD symptoms and social functional impairment
- Coworker support may be one critical resource for women veterans who have experienced assault MST



Summary based on the following paper:

Smith, N. A., Brady, J. M., Hammer, L. B., Carlson, K. F., & Mohr, C. D. (2020). Military sexual trauma among women Veterans: The buffering effect of coworker support. *Military Psychology, 32*(6), 441-449. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2020.1806635>