Gambling on Civvy Street: Assessing the Impact of Gambling Related Problems on UK Armed Forces Veterans and their Families

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Rationale

During transition to civvy street, Armed Forces veterans are:

• At increased risk of developing risky behaviours (e.g., alcohol and drug abuse, and excessive gambling) c
• More prone to developing mental health conditions (e.g., depression, anxiety, and PTSD) d

Research Question:

Do UK Armed Force veterans suffer from a hidden gambling problem?

Project Aims

• To assess the prevalence of problem gambling in UK Armed Forces veterans.
• To determine the impact of problem gambling, if any, on UK Armed Forces veterans and their families.

Project Timeline

Study 1:

Secondary analysis of an existing dataset:
The Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS) 2007

• The APMS 2007 (n= 7461) is a nationally representative survey of community dwelling adults in England and includes questions on both military service and gambling.
• Compare prevalence in veterans to age- and sex-matched non-veterans
• Identify trends as a function of length of service, and identify associations between family-related variables (e.g., traumatic life events involving family members)

Study 2:

UK-wide large sample survey

• Recruit from clinical and community settings
• Identify associations between demographics, combat experience/length/nature, use of emergency finances and, co-morbidities
• Multi-medium delivery to maximise engagement and minimise attrition.

Study 3:

Family focus-group interviews

• At risk and problem gamblers recruited from Study 2
• Semi-structured interviews with veterans and their families
• Identify impact on relationship, family finances and, children (if any)
• Thematic analysis to develop first order themes.

References:


Figure 1: Rates of problem gambling in the general population and the Armed Forces of the United States a and the United Kingdom b.

Figure 2. Sgt Stew Duffus (RE) “The first or second day after payday I would throw half or all of my money away on gambling and not pay the bills. I would then beg, steal and borrow to get through the month.”

Photograph by Graeme Main (reprinted from Soldier May 2016)