



# Graduate Research School

## SUITABLE FOR MASTER OF RESEARCH

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Impact of Parental Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and Deployment to Conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan on Adult Children in Military Families

Dr Anna Denejkina: [a.denejkina@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:a.denejkina@westernsydney.edu.au)

Research area: Sociology

This pilot study measures the impact of parental posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and deployment vs non-deployment to conflicts in Iraq (First Gulf War 1990-91; Second Gulf War 2003-11) and Afghanistan (2001-present) on adult children in military families. This impact is measured through the social and emotional wellbeing of children whose parents have been in the Australian Defence Force (ADF), and attachment styles of both the parent and child. This study focuses on parents of all sexes and genders, with at least one child aged >18.

This is a mixed-methods study, in which the research candidate will have the opportunity to work on either the qualitative and/or quantitative analyses, based on their prior research experience and/or training. Quantitative data will be analysed using SPSS, prior experience with SPSS required for student interested in working on the qualitative analyses. The student will also be trained in mixed-methods analyses.

Research candidate will assist with data collection, creation and maintenance of a coding dictionary, and write up of results.

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## SUITABLE FOR MASTER OF RESEARCH / PHD

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N/A - Visit our [find a supervisor page](#) for further advice.

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## **SUITABLE FOR PHD**

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Prevalence study: Impact of parental deployment vs non-deployment in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) on the wellbeing of adult children in defence families

Dr Anna Denejkina: [a.denejkina@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:a.denejkina@westernsydney.edu.au)

Research area: Sociology; Sociology of Health; Military Sociology; Psychology

This study measures the prevalence and impact of parental posttraumatic stress (PTS) and conflict deployment vs non-deployment on adult children in defence families. This impact is measured through the social and emotional wellbeing of adult children whose parents have been in the Australian Defence Force (ADF), and attachment styles of the parents and children. This study focuses on parents of all sexes and genders, with at least one child aged >18.

Though mental ill-health in serving and ex-serving personnel is well documented, with 22% of the ADF population living with a mental disorder and 8.3% experiencing PTSD (McFarlane, Hodson, Van Hooff, & Davies, 2011; Pinder, Iversen, Kapur, Wessely, & Fear, 2012), the impact of deployment and parental PTS on defence families continues to be an under-researched area (Rayce, Andersen, Jørgensen, & Nielsen, 2019; Cunitz et al, 2019; McGaw, Andrea, & Maybery, 2019), with specific types of problems and long-term outcomes currently not well understood (Alfano, Lau, Balderas, Bunnell, & Beidel, 2016, p.17).

Predominantly US research on defence families has demonstrated the “prevalence of secondary traumatisation and a potential negative impact on the child's mental health and relationships” (King & Smith, 2016, p.29). Though Australian research has been conducted into the attachment characteristics of combat veterans with PTSD specifically (Renaud, 2008), attachment measures have not been used in a study measuring the impact of deployment and PTS on adult children in defence families to understand attachment characteristics as an outcome of early childhood interactions with caregivers in this population (Bowlby, 1973; 1980; 1988).

This project is supervised by Dr Anna Denejkina. This is a mixed-methods study that can accommodate 1 PhD candidate focusing on attachment styles/characteristics in ADF families within the study.

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