

# Department of Defense Study to Identify Predictors of Health Outcomes among Veterans from Different Warzone Conflicts

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Predicting individuals at risk for developing post-deployment health issues among different veteran groups is at the core of a new Geisinger study. This study seeks to identify specific risk and protective factors associated with the onset and course of health problems, including Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among veterans.

The study is being Led by Joseph Boscarino, PhD, MPH, Senior Scientist for the Geisinger Center for Health Research and a US Army Vietnam combat veteran. With assistance from Geisinger doctors and researchers, including Thomas Urosevich, OD, MS, a recently deployed US Army Reserve Officer, this is the first study to look at health issues among multiple generations of veterans, including recently deployed National Guard and Reservists, as well as Gulf War and Vietnam veterans.

Studies have found that some individuals are more likely to develop PTSD, depression, and substance use issues following warzone deployments, however most do not and are resilient. The current study is especially interested in this "resilient" group. Many professionals today advocate for increased PTSD screening for those at risk and believe this may lead to better outcomes across both military and nonmilitary occupations, such as in police work, emergency medical work, and in other high risk occupations. This study seeks to assist in this effort.

For this study, Dr. Boscarino is leading a national team, including investigators at Kent State University and Tulane University that has been successful in predicting PTSD following traumatic exposures. This team has been in ongoing collaboration since the World Trade Center attacks in New York City in 2001 and has produced over 50 research publications.

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