

Military sexual assault linked to PTSD and depression in LGB veterans

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Regions of the brain associated with stress and posttraumatic stress disorder.
Credit: National Institutes of Health

In a *Journal of Traumatic Stress* study of military veterans, lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) veterans were twice as likely to have experienced sexual assault while in the military compared with non-LGB veterans. In addition, the experience of military sexual assault was directly linked to

the presence of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression among LGB veterans.

The findings highlight the likelihood that the presence of PTSD and depression in LGB veterans after military service may be due to past sexual assault [experiences](#).

More research is needed to understand the factors that may predict sexual assault in the military, particularly among LGB service members, as well as how to best address the mental health needs of veterans regardless of their identity.

"Our study highlights critical information: LGB veterans were more likely to experience [sexual assault](#) while serving in the military. Now is the time to further understand not only the experiences of veterans, but to understand current trends within the military to provide real-time prevention, training, and interventions, as needed," said lead author Dr. Carrie Lucas. (The views expressed in this material are those of the author, and do not reflect the official policy and position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force.)

More information: Carrie L. Lucas et al, Military Sexual Assault as a Mediator of the Association Between Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Depression Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Veterans, *Journal of Traumatic Stress* (2018). [DOI: 10.1002/jts.22308](https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22308)

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