

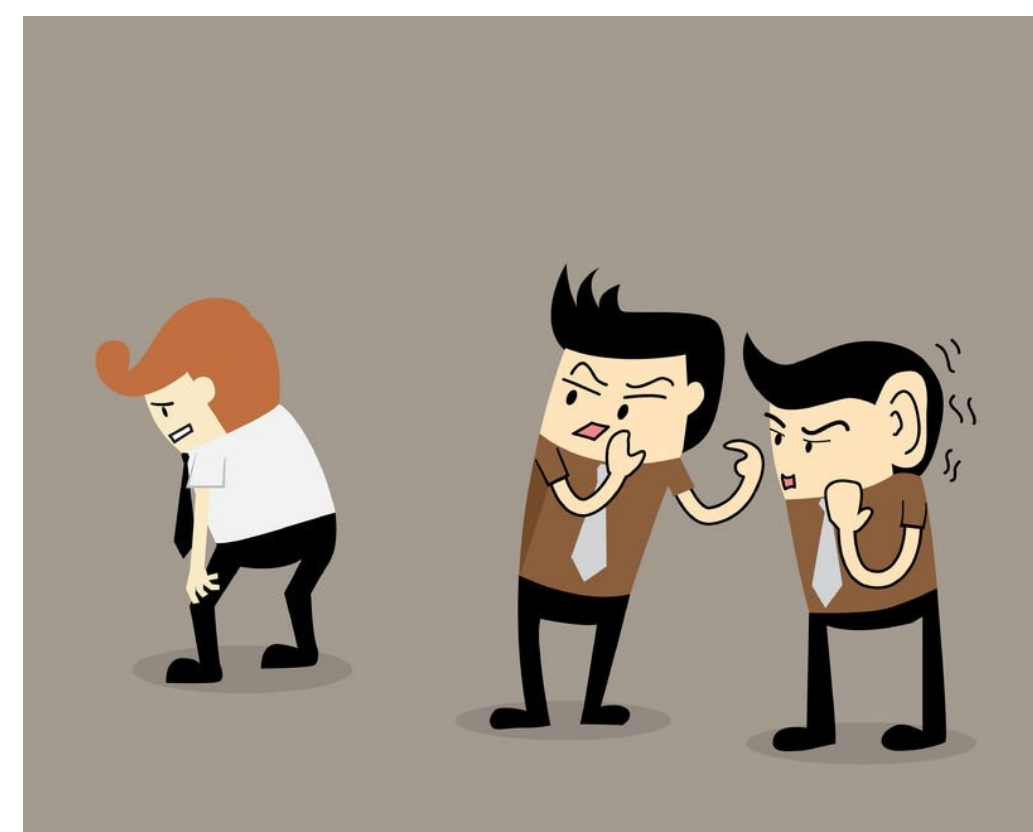
Gabriel Hadley

University of California, San Diego (UCSD), Department of Family Medicine and Public Health

Introduction

What is Ostracism?

The exclusion from society or groups



After deployment war veterans often face ostracism when settling back into the community

In general, the more combat-related stressors veterans experienced during deployment, the more likely they are to experience posttraumatic stress symptoms post-deployment

Posttraumatic stressors often occur alongside other mental health issues, those being depression, anxiety, substance abuse and suicide.

Objective

To determine the factors that contribute to negative mental health and feelings of ostracism among war veterans



Methods

A sample of veterans was collected by sending recruitment emails with an anonymous survey link over listservs moderated by the Illinois Army National Guard

129 participants

Upon completing the survey, participants received debriefing information and links to online mental health resources

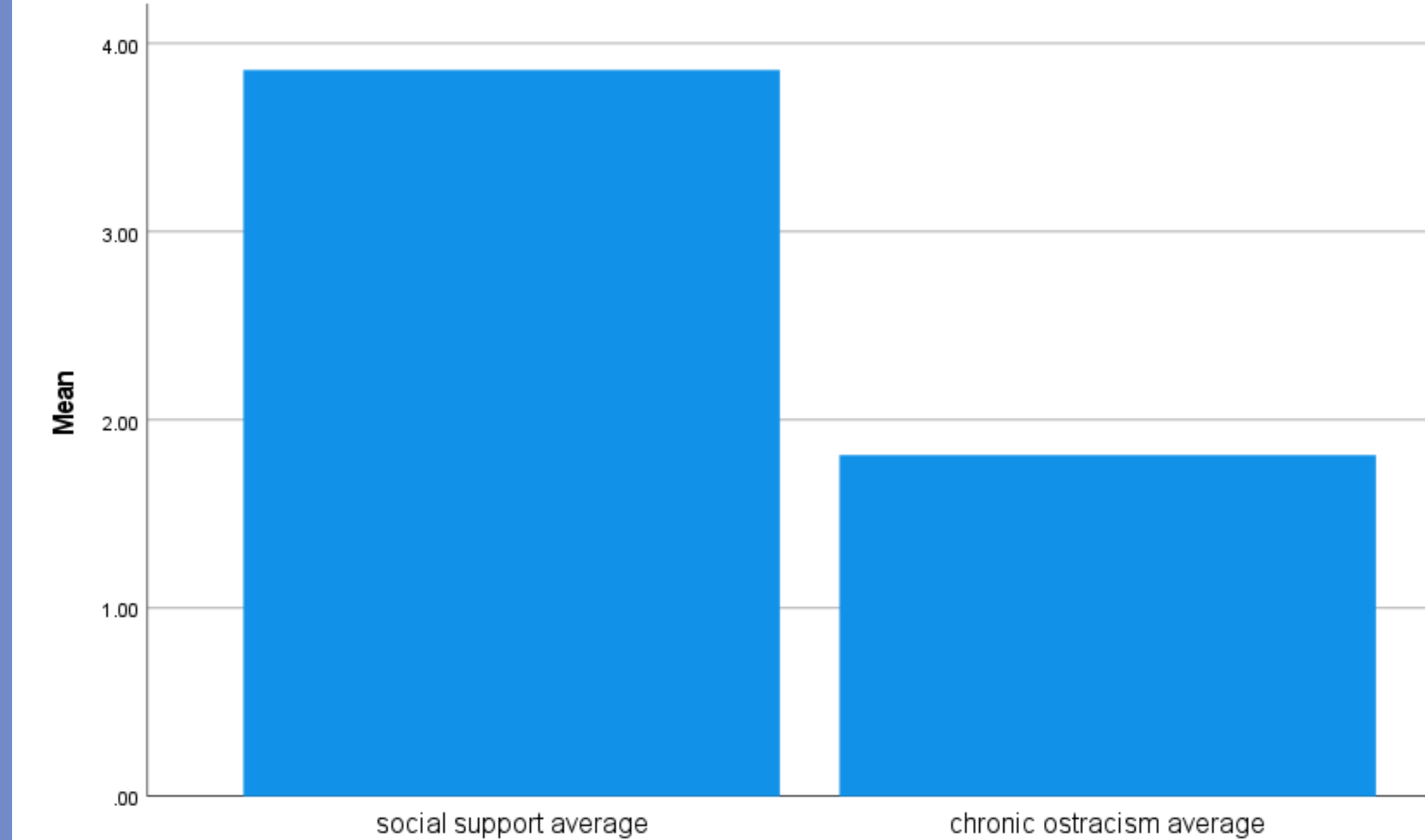
Participants first completed basic demographics (e.g., gender, race, age, deployment history). They then completed several measures in a standardized order. These measure were, **Mental distress, PTSD symptoms, Anxiety, Basic needs, Social support, Military support** and **Perceived ostracism.**

For all measures, we coded and averaged items together such that higher scores indicated higher endorsement of each construct.

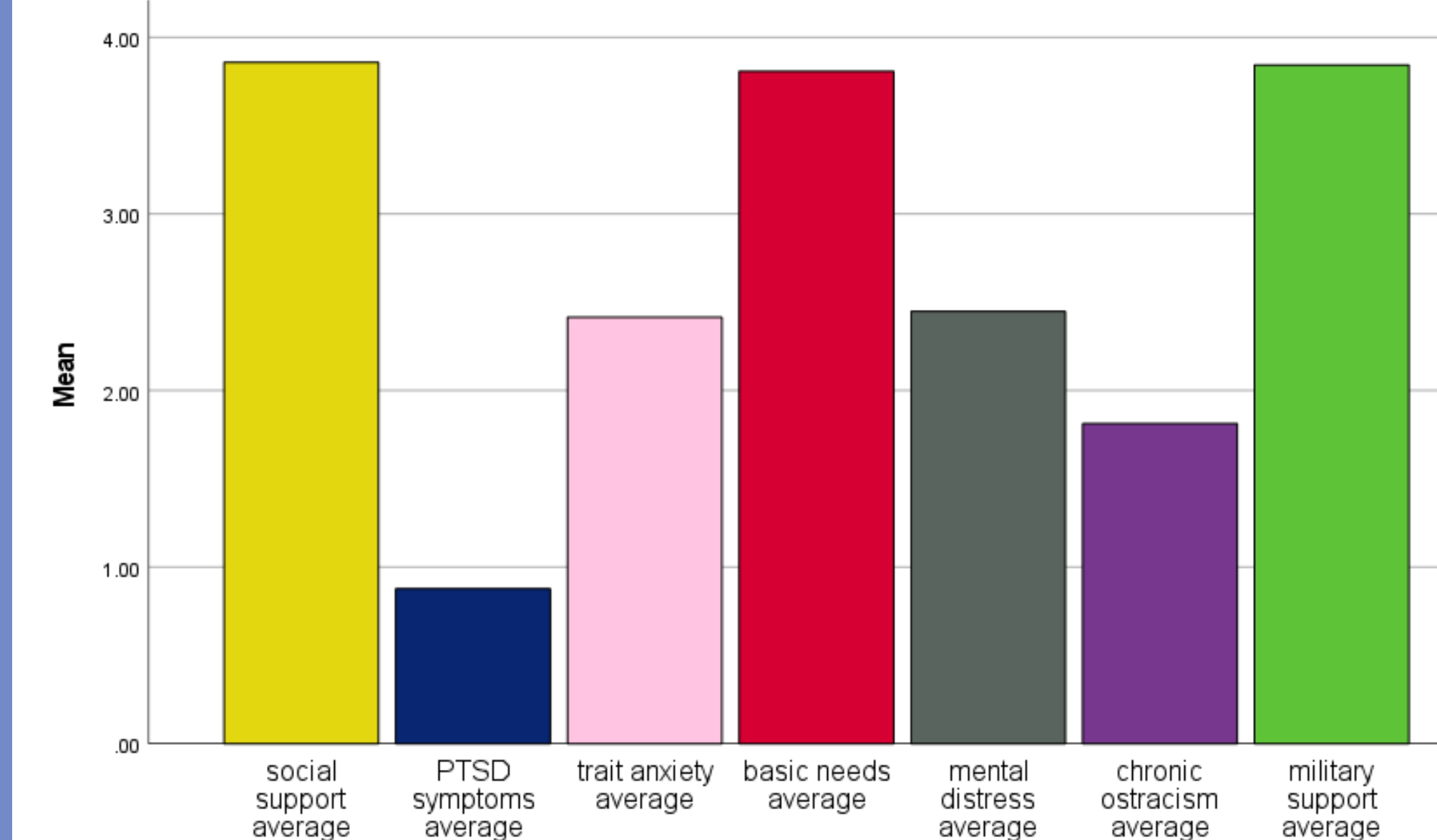
In analyzing this data I will be comparing the social support and how much this effected veterans feeling ostracized, against all other factors to see which contributes the most to veterans feeling ostracized post-deployment.

Results

Social support vs Ostracism



Mean score of all measures



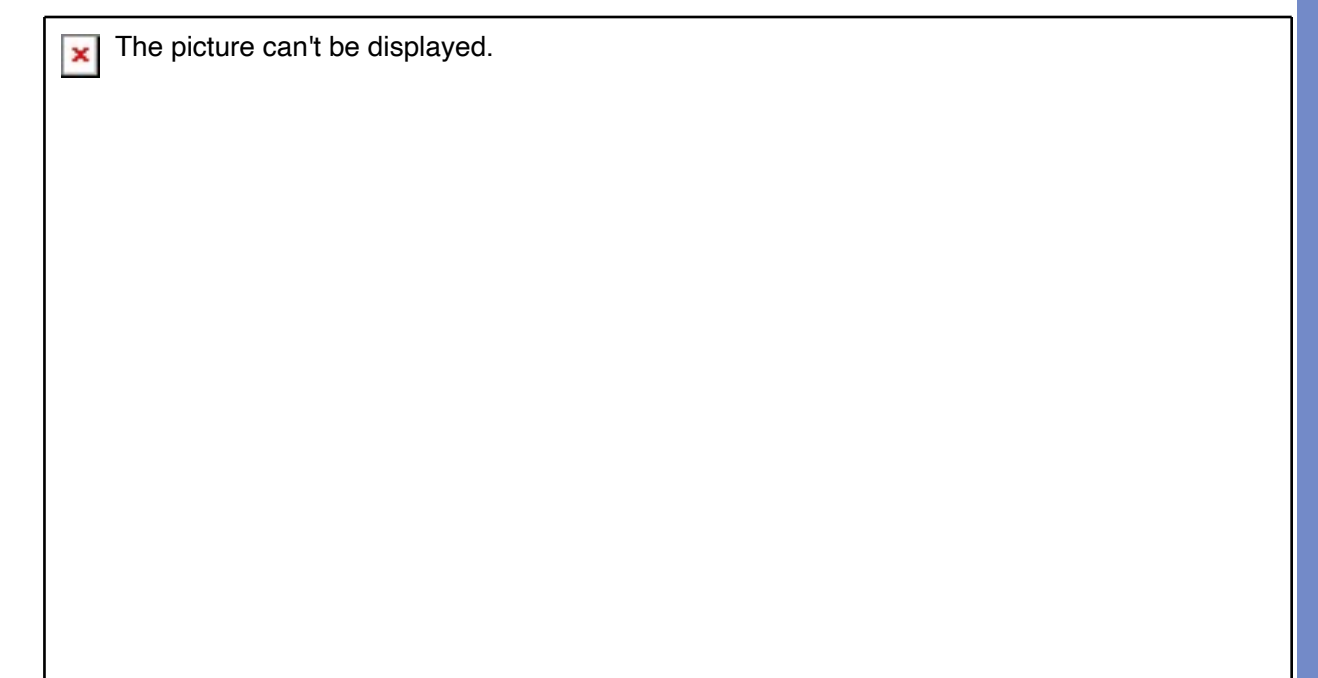
- Veterans' recalled deployment stress correlated positively with posttraumatic stress symptoms ($r = .39, p < .001$)
- Veterans' posttraumatic stress symptoms also correlated positively with anxiety ($r = .76, p < .001$) and psychological distress ($r = .73, p < .001$).
- Veterans perceived social support correlated negatively with PTSD symptoms and measures of anxiety and psychological distress.

Conclusion

- Social support was the highest rated score, it was strongly agreed upon by our war veterans and had a negative correlation. What contributes to the feeling of ostracism is the other factors like PTSD symptoms, anxiety, mental distress and chronic ostracism, that come from posttraumatic stressors post-deployment.
- Healthcare providers must be on the lookout for all returning veterans too provide the support they need as they transition back into the community.

Policy Implications

Mental health care services and interventions tailored specifically for the needs of war veterans are needed.



References

Wesselmann ED, Ispas D, Olson MD, Swerdlik ME, Caudle NM (2018) Does perceived ostracism contribute to mental health concerns among veterans who have been deployed? PLoS ONE 13(12): e0208438. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0208438>