

Perceptions of PTSD Based on Combat Experience

Dzanita Hrnica
Psych 120

History behind the research

- ❖ PTSD among war veterans does not solely develop from exposure to combat. Another risk factor is the *perceived threat* to one's life.
- ❖ Kravet, S., Katz, S., & Albez, D. (1994). Attitudes toward Israeli war veterans with disabilities: Combat versus noncombat military service and responsibility for the disability. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 37, 371-379. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/>
- ❖ Mulligan, K., Jones, N., Woodhead, C., Davies, M., Wessely, S., & Greenberg, N. (2010). Mental health of UK military personnel while on deployment in Iraq. *The British Journal Of Psychiatry*, 197, 405-410. doi:10.1192/bjp.bp.110.077263



History behind the research

- ❖ Vignettes are a tool in research that can be used to set the stage for implementing a measure.
- ❖ Kane, M., N., Green, D., Jacobs, R., J. (2010). Perceptions of students about younger and older men and women who may be homeless. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 36, 261-277. doi: 10.1080/01488376.2010.493845
- ❖ Powell, G., J., Doan, R., E. (1992). Combat and social support as variables in perceived symptomatology of combat-related posttraumatic stress disorder. *Psychological Reports*, 70, 1187-1194. Retrieved from <http://www.amsciepub.com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org>
- ❖ PCL-M (PTSD Checklist-Military Version) is a measure of PTSD and is used in VA settings
- ❖ Hospice & palliative care federation of Massachusetts. *PCL-M*. Retrieved from http://hospicefed.org/hospice_pages/PCL-M.htm

Method

- ❖ Participants were 21 undergraduate students
- ❖ Randomly assigned to one of two conditions

Conditions

- ❖ (9) combat and (12) non-combat vignettes
- ❖ identical except for the first three sentences

C A helicopter rescue specialist was deployed to Iraq and responded to many calls for help. Upon reaching the dangerous locations, his helicopter was shot at and hit on multiple occasions, forcing them to have to shoot back. The patients that he treated were severely wounded and many were children. Upon his return to the United States, he began to drink heavily and became less social. He also began to lose his temper more easily and sometimes found himself crying for no reason. He feels guilt for not being able to do more.

NC A helicopter rescue specialist was deployed to Iraq and was placed on call to respond to calls for help from injured soldiers on the battlefield. Although he was alerted on multiple occasions his helicopter never had a chance to take off on a single mission. The closest he got to battle was through the many stories he heard from fellow rescue specialists that had responded to the battlefield. Upon his return to the United States, he began to drink heavily and became less social. He also began to lose his temper more easily and sometimes found himself crying for no reason. He feels quilt for not being able to do more.

Method

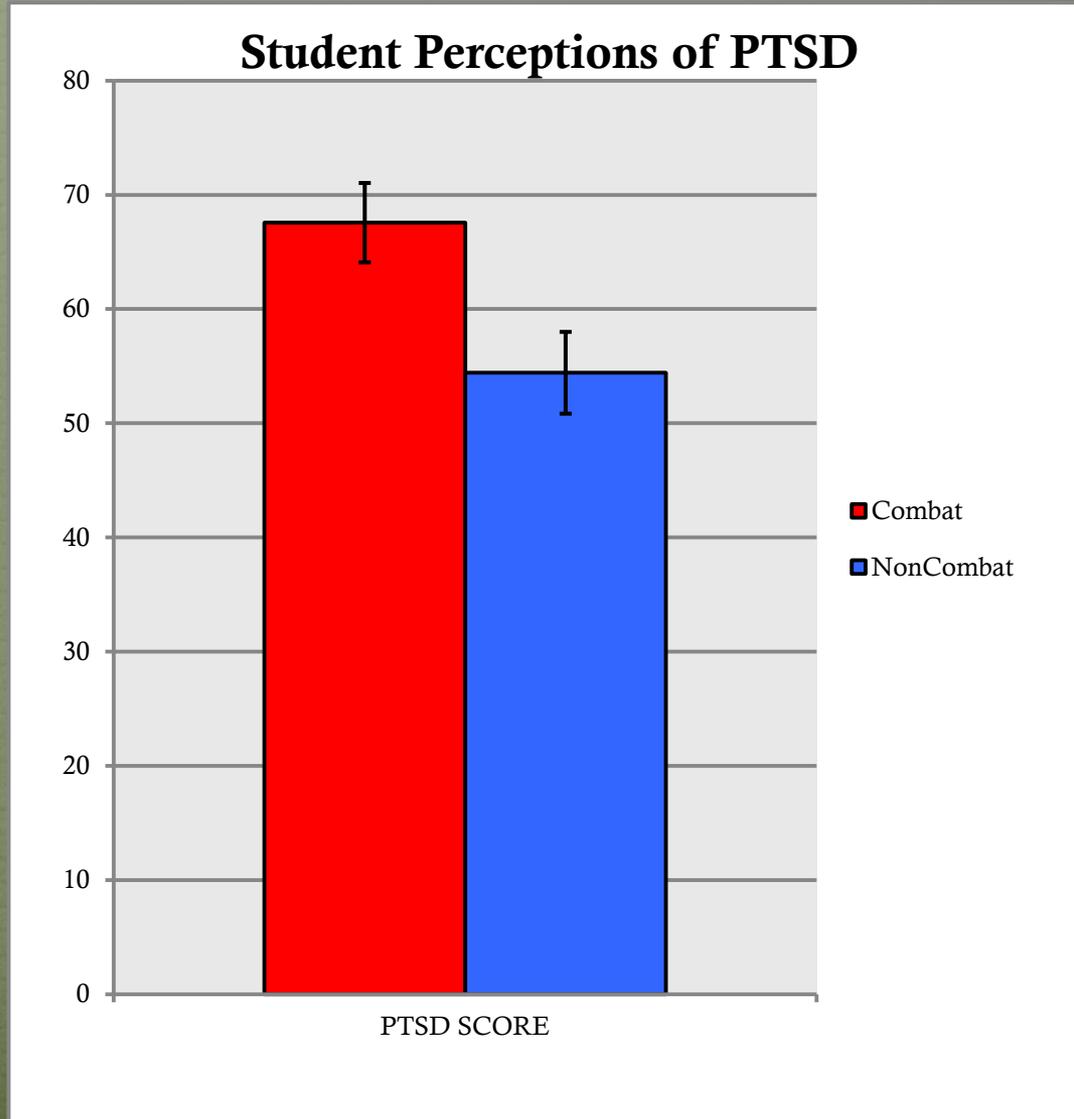
Measure

- ❖ PCL-M followed each vignette
- ❖ Participants were instructed to fill in the questionnaire as if they were the person in the vignette
- ❖ 5-point likert scale ranging from (1) not at all to (5) extremely
- ❖ Scores were totaled for each participant



Results

- ❖ T-test analysis shows a significance between the two conditions, $t(19) = 2.56, p = 0.02$
- ❖ Mean for combat condition was 67.56 (+/- 3.48)
- ❖ Mean for non-combat condition was 54.42 (+/- 3.59)
- ❖ Reject the null hypothesis



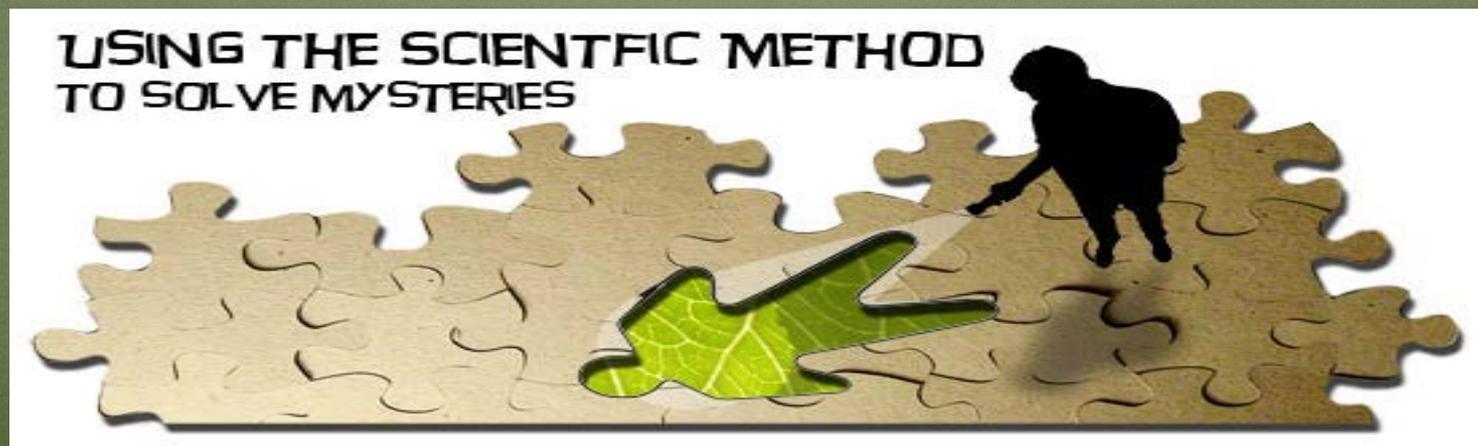
Discussion

What does the data mean?

- ❖ Student's Perceptions about PTSD in military veterans is based on combat experience and not symptoms of PTSD.

What could have been different?

- ❖ Greater sample size and equal numbers of participants in both conditions
- ❖ 3+ vignettes to allow for greater statistical analysis (ex: ANOVA)
- ❖ Allowing each participant a quiet area in which to take the survey
- ❖ Testing for potential third variables such as gender differences in participants



Links to google images in order of appearance

- ❖ <http://pharmazing.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/ptsd.jpg><http://>
- ❖ phoenixpatriotmagazine.com/summer12/files/2012/06/PTSD-main.jp
- ❖ http://askabiologist.asu.edu/sites/default/files/image/article/2009/scientific_method_header.jpg