Genitourinary Health in Female Military Personnel: An Exploration of Prevalence and Occupational Performance
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Genitourinary Health in Female Military Personnel: An Exploration of Prevalence and Occupational Performance

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Background:
• Women are increasingly assuming more diverse roles within military forces worldwide.
• A growing female workforce necessitates targeted health care support⁴.
• Genitourinary health issues, such as urinary tract infections (UTI) and incontinence, are more common in females² and can impact on work performance³.
• Women working in military contexts may be more at risk due to austere nature of many military environments and physical job demands.

Objectives:
• Explore what is currently known about female genitourinary health in military contexts.
• Consider the relationships between female genitourinary health and military occupational health, safety & performance.

Method:
Figure 1: Outline of research process

Literature Review Findings:
• Limited published research (Figure 2).
• UTIs affect 30.5% servicewomen (3.5% men)⁴.
• 26 – 30% of active Army & Air Force servicewomen reported urinary incontinence⁵,⁶.
• Evidence of worsening pelvic organ support after military training, with higher risk in paratrooper trainees (RR = 1.57)⁷.
• Women less likely to seek medical support for genitourinary health conditions⁸.
• Common management strategies, such as fluid restriction and altered voiding patterns may increase the risk of UTIs, heat-related illness and impaired occupational performance⁹.
• No published research outside US military context.

Preliminary Research Data:
Table 1: Summary of key attributes from initial survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>N = 147</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean age (years)</td>
<td>41 (range 19 – 73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time service</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 10 years service</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioned Officers</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelvic health concerns</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Common management strategies: fluid restriction, pads/liners, frequent toileting, pelvic floor exercises, activity modifications, surgery, bowel management.
- Pelvic health issues typically had a mild to moderate impact on work performance.
- 3 individual interviews completed.

Take home messages:

- Common management strategies: fluid restriction, pads/liners, frequent toileting, pelvic floor exercises, activity modifications, surgery, bowel management.
- Pelvic health issues typically had a mild to moderate impact on work performance.
- 3 individual interviews completed.

References:

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