SOCIAL SECURITY FOR SOLDIERS WITH POST-TRAUMATIC SYNDROME

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Abstract:

It is important to note that exact statistics and data on combat injuries to soldiers vary depending on specific situations, countries where the conflict is taking place, and many other factors. However, we can provide some basic information and statistics regarding injuries to soldiers in combat operations.

Injuries to soldiers in combat are a common part of military operations and can vary from a minor injury to injuries that result in permanent consequences or death. They often occur in combat operations on the ground, as well as in air operations and sea operations.Many soldiers who survive combat injuries face lasting effects that affect their health and lives. The most common permanent effects include loss of a limb, brain damage, paralysis, and psychological trauma such as PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

According to statistics from the United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations (UNDPKO), between 2016 and 2020, an average of 1,245 deployed soldiers and civilians were injured annually. Of this number, 90% of injuries

were caused by explosions of unexploded ammunition or improvised explosives, which are a common means of combat. Around 10% of injuries were caused by firearms. (RELIEFWEB, 2023)

According to statistics from the US Department of Defense, between 2001 and 2021, more than 52,000 American soldiers were injured in Afghanistan and Iraq. Of this number, 5,322 soldiers were killed and 47,590 soldiers were wounded. The most common injuries include limb injuries, head and brain injuries, and spinal cord injuries. (US Military Casualties – Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) Casualty Summary by Casualty Category, 2023)

Military operations also result in injuries to civilians and non-military personnel. Between 2014 and 2021, an average of 1,120 civilians were injured per year in air operations in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, according to statistics from Airwars, an organization that tracks civilian casualties of military operations. (AIRWARS, 2023)

It is important to remember that the statistics of soldiers injured in battle are only numerical data and hide behind them many tragedies and individual stories.

Many soldiers who survive combat injuries face lasting effects that affect their health and lives. The most common permanent effects include loss of a limb, brain damage, paralysis, and psychological trauma such as PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

In addition, combat injury can also affect the families of wounded soldiers, who must cope with the consequences and adapt to new circumstances.

In general, the number of soldiers injured in combat is decreasing due to advances in protection and technology. Modern military equipment and vehicles have improved armor and blast protection, reducing the risk of injury. However, despite this, the injuries of soldiers in combat remain a current issue that needs to be addressed.

Military organizations and governments strive to improve the protection of soldiers and minimize the risk of injury, as well as to ensure fair welfare and care for injured soldiers and their families. These measures include, for example, financial compensation, rehabilitation, health care and support for psychological well-being.

Overall, it is important to recognize that combat injuries to soldiers are a serious problem and have a negative impact on the health and lives of soldiers and their families. It is important to take measures to minimize the risk of injury and ensure adequate care and support for injured soldiers and their families.

There are various factors that can affect the risk of injury to soldiers in combat. Some of these factors include:

- Type and intensity of conflict: Soldiers who participate in intensive combat operations or in wars are exposed to a higher risk of injury.
- Military Skills and Training: Soldiers who have better military skills and training have a better chance of surviving combat and minimizing the risk of injury.
- Technological improvements: Modern military equipment and vehicles are designed to minimize the risk of injury to soldiers in combat.
- Tactics and Strategy: The right tactics and strategy can help minimize the risk of injury to soldiers in combat.
- Conditions in a combat environment: Adverse conditions in a combat environment, such as extreme weather or terrain, can increase the risk of injury.
- Soldier Mentality: The right mentality and discipline can help minimize the risk of injury to soldiers in combat. (EASTMANT, 2009)

Injuries to soldiers in combat are a serious problem that must be addressed at various levels. At the military level, technology and training of soldiers must be improved. At the political level, governments must ensure fair social security and care for wounded soldiers and their families.

Soldiers are often exposed to traumatic experiences as part of their job. They may be exposed to various types of traumatic experiences, such as combat, convoy attacks, bombings, kidnappings, loss of friends and colleagues, injuries or witnessing the suffering of civilians.

These traumatic experiences can have various effects on a soldier‘s psychological health. Some soldiers can successfully cope with stress and traumatic experiences without developing PTSD. However, other soldiers may develop PTSD, which can manifest in a variety of ways, such as nightmares, repeated memories of traumatic experiences, avoidance of situations associated with the trauma, increased irritability, and outbursts of anger.

The causes of PTSD in soldiers can be varied, including the severity and duration of the traumatic experience, lack of post-mission support, neglect of self-esteem and loss of self-confidence, lack of sleep and nutrition, prolonged isolation, and inadequate treatment of physical or psychological injuries.

It is important that soldiers who have signs related to post-traumatic syndrome get adequate help as soon as possible. Various support programs and professional assistance are available in the armies and armed forces of countries that try to

help soldiers with their psychological health after traumatic experiences.

Posttraumatic syndrome

Post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) is a psychological condition that can occur in some soldiers who have been exposed to traumatic events in combat. PTSD manifests itself in a variety of ways, including recurring nightmares, increased anxiety, severe mood swings, insomnia, inability to control emotions, and more. (EASTMANT, 2009)

PTSD can have serious and negative consequences on a soldier‘s health, quality of life, and ability to perform his duties as a soldier. Some of these consequences include disruption of interpersonal relationships, distaste for previously enjoyable activities, and in extreme cases, self-harm or suicide.

Treatment for PTSD can involve a variety of modalities, including drug therapy, psychotherapy, and the like. In some cases, hospitalization and intensive care may also be required. It is important that soldiers with PTSD do not delay treatment and that they receive adequate care and support from their superiors, family and friends. (SCHIRALDI, 2009)

In addition, to minimize the likelihood of PTSD, it is important that soldiers are adequately trained and prepared for what awaits them on the battlefield. Soldiers who are well prepared and confident in their skills and equipment have a better chance of successfully returning without experiencing PTSD.

The incidence of PTSD is a serious problem affecting many soldiers who have been exposed to traumatic events in combat. It is important that soldiers with PTSD receive appropriate care to minimize the likelihood of the condition occurring in the future.

The author Antonín Kozoň (2014) describes experiencing harm through these three phases.

a) shock- this is the phase that starts right after the attack itself. The victim cannot recover from what happened, why it happened to her. The duration of this first phase can range from a few hours to a few days.
b) reaction, incipient adaptation- in this phase, the person is already starting to cope with the situation, even if the mental capacity is still slightly limited. He can cope with this situation in two ways. The first is that the victim constantly talks about the given situation, returns to the unpleasant experience, to unpleasant feelings. It can be said as if she experiences it all over again when

remembering the given misfortune. The second way is that the victim closes in on himself. He doesn't want to talk about what happened to anyone. The duration of the entire second phase is individual, but it can last even one year.

c) final adaptation, new life situation- in the last phase, we are talking about the fact that the victim is returning to the life he led before the event that happened to him. The so-called secondary traumatization. Thus, thanks to the insensitive reactions of the environment and other factors, the post-traumatic psychological disorder can return to the given victim.

Treatment of post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) in soldiers can be very complex and may involve a combination of pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy and other therapeutic methods. Here are some ways to treat PTSD in soldiers.

1. Pharmacotherapy: In some cases, soldiers with PTSD may be prescribed medication to relieve symptoms such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, and the like. These medications may include antidepressants, anxiolytics, and hypnotics. Pharmacotherapy should be conducted under the supervision of a physician and regularly monitored.
2. Psychotherapy: Psychotherapy can be an effective way to treat PTSD in soldiers. One of the most common types of psychotherapy used to treat PTSD is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT focuses on changing negative thoughts and behaviors that cause anxiety and depression. CBT can help soldiers identify and change destructive thought patterns that can trigger PTSD symptoms.
3. Exponential therapy: Exponential therapy is a therapeutic technique that focuses on re-experiencing traumatic events in order to reduce anxiety and improve functioning. Soldiers may be offered exponential therapy with gradually increasing amounts of exposure to traumatic experiences to gradually come to terms with their emotions and manage their reactions.
4. Other Therapies: There are many other therapeutic methods that are used to treat PTSD in soldiers, such as family therapy, meditation, art therapy, and talk therapy. These therapies can be used alone or in combination with other therapeutic approaches.
5. Support: An important part of treating PTSD in soldiers is support from family, friends and superiors. Support can include empathy, understanding, and motivation for the soldier to continue treatment. (TICK, 2005)

In addition to the above treatments for PTSD in soldiers, there are other therapeutic approaches and techniques that can be used to relieve symptoms and improve the quality of life of soldiers with PTSD. Some of these approaches include.

1. Hypnotherapy: Hypnotherapy can be a useful method to relieve anxiety and tension in soldiers with PTSD. A therapist can use hypnosis to induce a state of relaxation and change perception and thinking.
2. Acupuncture: Acupuncture can help relieve PTSD symptoms in soldiers. Acupuncture involves inserting needles into certain points on the body, which results in the release of tension and improved blood circulation.
3. Massage therapy: Massage therapy can be helpful in relieving pain, tension, and anxiety in soldiers with PTSD. Massage can help improve blood circulation, relieve muscle tension and improve sleep quality.
4. Lifestyle Changes: Lifestyle changes, such as improving eating habits, increasing physical activity, and exercising regularly, can help alleviate PTSD symptoms in soldiers. Physical activity can help improve mood and reduce anxiety.
5. Canestherapy: Animal-assisted therapy can be helpful in improving PTSD symptoms in soldiers. It is used to promote emotional and physical well-being through animals, which can help improve mood and relieve anxiety. (SCHIRALDI, 2009)

It is important to remember that each soldier with PTSD is unique and may need a combination of different therapeutic approaches and techniques. Treatment of PTSD in soldiers may take longer and require more than one therapeutic method. An important element of treatment is also the support of family and friends, who can be a support during the entire process.The cost of treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in soldiers can be substantial and depends on a variety of factors, such as the severity of symptoms, length of treatment, availability of treatment, and geographic location. Some of the military PTSD treatment options listed above may be covered by health insurance, the amount of which may vary depending on the specific health plan. If a soldier does not have access to health insurance, he can turn to various organizations or government agencies that provide assistance to soldiers with PTSD. (GROSSMAN, 2004)

The cost of PTSD treatment can also vary depending on the country and region where the treatment is provided. In the United States, the cost of treating PTSD in soldiers is estimated to be between €5,000 and €25,000 per patient per year, depending on the severity of symptoms and the type of treatment. In Europe and other parts of the world, costs can vary depending on the availability of healthcare and the type of treatment.

It is important to emphasize that while treating PTSD can be costly, it is an investment in the health and well-being of traumatized soldiers. Inadequate treatment can have long-term consequences for soldiers‘ health and quality of life, as well as their ability to perform their duties and survive in normal life.

Therefore, it is important to provide soldiers with PTSD with sufficient and appropriate treatment so that they can return to a full life and work to regain their mental and physical well-being.

In addition to the costs of PTSD treatment itself, there may be other costs associated with the condition. For example, armies and armed forces must expend funds to train additional soldiers for military operations, or training to replace those who are unable to perform their duties due to PTSD.

Deterioration of the quality of life as a result of the disease

Every disease has symptoms that can be subjectively unpleasant and limiting. The quality of life is expressed by the degree of subjective satisfaction, its objective characteristics are meaningless, because people experience their illness and the deterioration associated with it differently. It is always necessary to realize to what extent the disease burdens their life, in which areas it limits and puts them at a disadvantage:

- Degree of self-reliance and independenceto help another person is a very important aspect (Křivohlavý, 2002). Independence in self-care and intimate hygiene is especially important.
- The degree of generalized limitation of options, increased fatigue and exhaustionthey are non-specific manifestations of many different diseases. Their consequence is a restriction, or loss of the ability to work or perform various activities of interest. The ability to maintain social contacts is also related to this.
- A measure of social contact ability, including maintaining communication skills and other competencies that allow maintaining relationships with other people and sharing various activities with them.
- The level of preservation of the overall feeling of well-being,which depends on the physical and mental state of the patient, disturbed by pain, exhaustion and complex helplessness (Vágnerová, 2008).

In addition, PTSD can also affect soldiers‘ social and occupational functioning. For example, soldiers with PTSD may have a limited ability to work and collaborate in a team, which can affect the effectiveness and performance of their unit. They may also have problems in their personal life and social relationships.

Therefore, investing in the early treatment and prevention of PTSD among soldiers is critical to protecting their health and well-being, as well as protecting

unit safety and effectiveness. This may include flexible health plans and programs that focus on the prevention and treatment of PTSD and increase awareness of the condition within the ranks of the armed forces. Psychological support services may also be provided to soldiers returning from combat zones to help them manage stress and trauma. (GROSSMAN, 2004)

The overall cost of treating PTSD in soldiers can be high, but investments in prevention and treatment are critical to protecting the health and well-being of soldiers and to ensuring the effectiveness and safety of military operations.

Treatment of post-traumatic syndrome

Treatment can have various side effects, which may vary depending on the methods and drugs used and on the individual characteristics of the patient. Here are some of the possible side effects of treatment for PTSD.

1. Adverse effects of drugs: Antidepressants, antipsychotics and anxiolytics are often used in the treatment of post-traumatic syndrome. These medications can cause side effects such as nausea, vomiting, constipation, insomnia, fatigue, loss of appetite, weight changes, and problems with sexual function.
2. Drug interactions: When multiple drugs are used simultaneously, an unwanted interaction between them can occur, which can worsen side effects or reduce the effectiveness of the drugs.
3. Dependence on drugs: Some drugs used in the treatment of post-traumatic syndrome can cause addiction or abuse if used for a long time or in excessive doses.
4. Emotional manifestations: In some therapeutic interventions, such as exposure therapy or EMDR, the patient may feel strong emotions such as anxiety, fear, anger, rage or sadness. These reactions can be temporary and can help in processing traumatic events.
5. Worsening of symptoms: In some cases, the treatment of post-traumatic syndrome can cause worsening of symptoms such as nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety or depression. These symptoms may be temporary and may be part of the healing process.
6. Physical Manifestations: PTSD can have physical manifestations such as headaches, muscle and joint pain, fatigue, and changes in appetite. Some forms of treatment, such as physical therapy or exercise, can help relieve these symptoms, but they can also cause symptoms to worsen temporarily.

7. Social effects: Treatment for PTSD can also have social effects, such as changes in interaction with family and friends, difficulties at work or school, problems with concentration and attention, loss of interest in normal activities, and social isolation.
8. Financial costs: The treatment of post-traumatic syndrome can be financially expensive, especially if a combination of different therapeutic approaches is required. Some of these costs may be covered by social security or an insurance company, but they may also be out-of-pocket costs for the patient. (SCHIRALDI, 2009) It is important that patients decide to treat post-traumatic syndrome only after weighing the benefits and risks and after consulting with their doctor or therapist. Each person is unique and may have different reactions to different forms of treatment, so it is important that treatment is tailored to the individual needs and characteristics of the patient.

Social security during the treatment of post-traumatic syndrome can be diverse and depends on specific circumstances. In general, if post-traumatic syndrome manifests itself in the form of mental illness, a person may be entitled to various forms of support from social security. (HOWELL, 2019)

One possibility may be the granting of a disability pension in the event that the illness prevents a person from working. Disability pension can be granted for a definite or indefinite period, depending on the severity of the illness and its impact on the ability to work. (KOLLÁROVÁ, KOVAČ, 20 13)

Another option may be the granting of a care allowance in the event that a person suffering from post-traumatic syndrome needs help and support in everyday life. The care allowance can be granted in different categories depending on the severity of the illness and the need for help.

In addition, a person suffering from post-traumatic syndrome may also be entitled to various social benefits, such as unemployment benefit, housing allowance or benefits for medical aids. (ALTSCHULER, 2009)In any case, it is necessary to consult with experts and specialists in social security, who will help determine the most suitable forms of support for a specific person and disease.

If a person suffering from post-traumatic syndrome needs treatment, they may be entitled to various forms of health care that are covered by health insurance. These may include psychiatric and psychological counseling, pharmacotherapy and other therapeutic interventions. In some cases, it may be necessary to hospitalize the patient in a psychiatric ward. (HOWELL, 2019) In the event that a person suffering from post-traumatic syndrome needs to work with a doctor or psychologist to improve their health situation, they may be entitled to compensation for treatment costs. This compensation can be paid from health

insurance or can be provided as part of social benefits. (KOŠŤÁL, DROPPA, 2014)

If a person suffering from post-traumatic syndrome is no longer able to work, they can apply to the social insurance company for a disability pension. This pension can be granted based on the diagnosis and severity of the illness. In some cases, early retirement may also be granted. (HRČKOVÁ, HRČKA, 2011)

It is important to note that specific forms of support and compensation depend on the country and the legislation in force in that country. It is therefore important to consult with social security and health care professionals in a particular country to get the most up-to-date information on support for PTSD sufferers.

Law no. 328/2002 Coll., the Act on the Social Security of Policemen and Soldiers and on Amendments and Supplements to Certain Laws is a law that regulates the social security of soldiers within the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic (OS SR). This law provides certain social benefits and protection for soldiers who serve in the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic.

The law provides for various types of social security, including the following areas:

1. Pension security: The law regulates the conditions and entitlements to old-age pension, disability pension, survivor‘s pension and widow‘s pension for soldiers of the Slovak Armed Forces and their family members.
2. Health insurance: Provides soldiers with access to health care and covers the cost of treatment and health services.
3. Accident insurance: Insures soldiers in the event of an injury in the line of duty and provides them with financial compensation or other benefits based on the severity of the injury.
4. Mother and child protection: Provides support for pregnant soldiers and mothers of soldiers during maternity leave, including maternity allowance and other benefits.
5. Welfare benefits and benefits: It provides various welfare benefits and benefits to soldiers and their families such as family allowance, housing allowance, school fee allowance, transport allowance and more.
6. Employment protection: The law provides certain protection to soldiers in connection with employment, for example during temporary incapacity for work or in the case of deployment outside the Slovak Republic.

It is important to emphasize that specific provisions and details regarding the social security of soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic can be

changed and updated. For the most up-to-date information and exact conditions, it is advisable to consult the applicable laws and relevant legal regulations in the given area with the relevant public administration bodies of the Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic.

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