

## RESEARCH COMPASS – ISSUE 2 (MARCH 2024)



Welcome to the second issue of *Research Compass*, the Atlas Institute's newsletter showcasing the latest information about our Veteran and Family well-being and mental health research. This issue has current updates on studies in which you can participate, recent research we have presented, how to get involved in our research as an advisor and our latest publications.

### In this issue

- **Research spotlight**
  - [New study: Women Veterans' health and well-being study](#)
  - [The Royal's Research Week Discovery Fair](#)
  - [Study: Adult children of Canadian Armed Forces Veterans](#)
- **In case you missed it:**  
[CIMVHR Forum 2023](#)
- **Getting involved in research at Atlas**
- **Latest publications**

Some current topics:



Adult children of Veterans



Aging Veterans' mental health



Intimate partner violence (IPV)



Moral injury



Neural correlates of mental health



Novel treatment interventions



Peer support



Traumatic brain injury

## Research spotlight

### **New study: Examining women Veterans' health and well-being needs**

Are you a woman who has served in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)? Consider participating in a new study by the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families.

The Atlas Institute is launching a study to ask how women accessed care during service and how they are accessing care now. The study will also examine how women Veterans have supported their own well-being and their current mental and physical health, and it will ask about experiences working in the CAF or RCMP.

The study has been designed for women Veterans with women Veterans who understand the unique challenges that come with a life of service.

Contribute to the evidence about women Veterans' health and well-being needs, inform recommendations for improving care and join a group of women Veterans passionate about making a difference!

**[Participate today »](#)**

Questions?

✉ [atlasresearch@theroyal.ca](mailto:atlasresearch@theroyal.ca)

### **Unlocking minds: Atlas Institute's Clinical Research team presents at The Royal's Research Week Discovery Fair**

The Atlas Institute's Clinical Research team was at the 2024 Discovery Fair, an annual celebration of research excellence at The Royal. The team presented their work in neuroimaging and mental health, specifically within the area of neurofeedback. The team conducted live demonstrations of their portable EEG electrode systems for students, clinicians, fellow researchers and other curious attendees. Team members also offered attendees a glimpse into ongoing studies exploring minority stress and vicarious traumatization among Veterans and their partners.



*The Atlas Institute's Clinical Research team.*

## Research spotlight

### Qualitative study on the experiences of adult children of CAF Veterans

Family members of CAF Veterans often face unique challenges related to military culture, including relocation, prolonged separation and heightened awareness of the serving member's safety. Adult children of CAF Veterans represent an understudied population, creating a significant gap in our knowledge of how children of military Families adapt and experience resilience and how these capacities may be sustained through adulthood.

Adult children who participate in this study will provide insight into how their experiences influenced their adult lives. The study will involve participation in a virtual interview lasting 60 to 90 minutes. Participants must be 18 years of age or older and a child of a CAF Veteran with the Regular Force and/or Reserve Class A, B or C to be included in this study. Note: Adult children of CAF Veterans with the Cadet Organizations Administration and Training Service (COATS) or Cadet Instructors Cadre (CIC) instructors and adult children of currently serving CAF members are unable to participate.

✉ For more information on this study please contact:  
Cassandra McDonald at [cassandra.mcdonald@msvu.ca](mailto:cassandra.mcdonald@msvu.ca)

REB# 2023029  
Principal Investigators: Dr. Deborah Norris  
& Laryssa Lamrock

**PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY EXPLORING  
THE EXPERIENCES OF ADULT CHILDREN  
OF CANADIAN ARMED FORCES VETERANS**

**We are interested in:**

- ✔ Understanding the effects of military service on family members
- ✔ Exploring how being raised in a military family influences one's later life
- ✔ Developing recommendations for policy and programming to better support Adult children of CAF Veterans

**You are eligible to participate if you are...**

- ✔ Aged 18 or older
- ✔ A child of a CAF veteran with Regular and/or Primary Reserve Force service.
- ✔ Not currently in the CAF

**What is involved?**

- ✔ Participation includes a 60-90 minute interview over a secure video-conferencing platform
- ✔ Compensation provided.

<https://web.miniextensions.com/FnGx3yilWIS6WhM3dxv>  
Or contact us for more information: Cassandra McDonald at [Cassandra.McDonald@msvu.ca](mailto:Cassandra.McDonald@msvu.ca)



**ATLAS INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND FAMILIES**

**MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY**

**The Royal's Institute of Mental Health Research**  
affiliated with the University of Ottawa

## In case you missed it

The Atlas Institute presented new research findings in October 2023 at the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) Forum, an annual conference that brings together hundreds of researchers, policy makers, service providers, peer support and not-for-profit organizations to share the latest knowledge on military, Veteran and Family health.

Researchers from our Applied and Clinical Research teams presented research findings on a range of topics, including

- Minority stress as a potentially morally injurious event for diverse Veterans
- Measuring housing and environmental well-being in Veterans
- Brain regions involved in processing traumatic experiences
- Self-reported mental health differences between Veterans and non-Veterans
- Results of neurofeedback studies for Veterans living with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)



## Getting involved in research at Atlas

Interested in participating in research? Research participation helps expand our understanding of Veteran and Family mental health and well-being, and can support the improvement of treatments, programs and services. The Atlas Institute leads and supports research projects and new opportunities in which to participate, with varying levels of involvement, and they become available regularly. Check out a few of the studies currently looking for participants.

### Led by Atlas

- Examining the association between unmet health and well-being needs and mental health for women Veterans of the CAF and RCMP

[Learn more and participate »](#)

- Couples and secondary traumatic stress (CaSTS) study
- Self-regulation of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) neurocircuitry using multiple sessions of real-time functional magnetic resonance imaging (rt-fMRI)
- The neural correlates of minority stress: Uncovering systemic oppression related to the intersectionality of identity with neuroimaging and machine learning
- Gender identity narratives among transgender and gender diverse military members, Veterans and civilians: A pilot study

To find out if you're eligible to participate, please contact:

✉ [ella.bawagan@theroyal.ca](mailto:ella.bawagan@theroyal.ca)

### Supported by Atlas

- [Studying the effectiveness and implementation of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga for Canadian Veterans with PTSD](#)
- [Brain measures linked to hyperarousal in PTSD using MRI imaging](#)
- [Feasibility and effectiveness of a cognitive rehabilitation intervention for Veterans with mild traumatic brain injury \(mTBI\)](#)

[Learn more about recruiting research projects »](#)

### Other ways to get involved

To expand our connections with the Veteran and Family community, the Atlas Institute has developed a volunteer Cadre to help us engage and work with a larger and more diverse group, including Francophone Veterans and Families. We also are seeking to improve our ability to connect with individuals with lived expertise who are available to participate in projects, including research projects, by taking part in surveys, panels, webinars and town hall events.

[APPLY TO THE CADRE](#)

## Latest publications

moral injury   posttraumatic stress disorder  
health care workers

### The independent and combined impact of moral injury and moral distress on post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms among healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic

2024-02-09

D'Alessandro-Lowe AM, Patel H, Easterbrook B, Ritchie K, Brown A, Xue Y, Karram M, Millman H, Sullo E, Pichtikova M, **Nicholson A**, Heber A, Malain A, O'Connor C, Schielke H, **Rodrigues S**, **Hosseiny F**, McCabe RE, Lanius RA, McKinnon MC  
*European Journal of Psychotraumatology*

[Read the paper](#)

moral injury   health care workers

### Exposure to moral stressors and associated outcomes in healthcare workers: Prevalence, correlates, and impact on job attrition

2024-02-09

Nazarov A, Forchuk CA, Houle SA, Hansen KT, Plouffe RA, Liu JJW, Dempster KS, Le T, Kocha I, **Hosseiny F**, Heesters A, **Richardson JD**  
*European Journal of Psychotraumatology*

[Read the paper](#)

women Veterans

### 'Proud, brave, and tough': Women in the Canadian combat arms

2024-02-05

Hendel E, **MacEachern K**, Haxhiu A, Waruszynski BT  
*Frontiers in Sociology*

[Read the paper](#)

military sexual trauma

### Increasing understanding of the barriers to military sexual trauma-related reporting and treatment seeking in Canada

2024-01-29

Brown A, Millman H, Tam-Seto L, Imre-Millei B, Ibbotson A, Buchart L, Heber A, Samplonius ME, **Mulligan A**, **Notarianni M**, McKinnon MC

*Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health*

[Read the paper](#)

posttraumatic stress disorder   brain imaging

### Evidence for locus coeruleus-norepinephrine system abnormality in military PTSD revealed by neuromelanin-sensitive MRI

2024-01-29

**McCall A**, Forouhandehpour R, Celebi S, Richard-Malenfant C, Hamati R, Guimond S, Tuominen L, Weinshenker D, Jaworska N, McQuaid RJ, Shlik J, Robillard R, Kaminsky Z, Cassidy CM  
*Biological Psychiatry*

[Read the paper](#)

moral injury   systematic review

### Measuring moral distress and moral injury: A systematic review and content analysis of existing scales

2023-12-27

Houle SA, Ein N, Gervasio J, Plouffe RA, Litz BT, Carleton RN, Hansen KT, Liu JJW, Ashbaugh AR, Callaghan W, Thompson MM, Easterbrook B, Smith-MacDonald L, **Rodrigues S**, Bélanger SAH, Bright K, Lanius RA, Baker C, Younger W, Bremault-Phillips S, **Hosseiny F**, **Richardson JD**, Nazarov A

*Clinical Psychology Review*

[Read the paper](#)

[Watch the webinar](#)



## Latest publications

posttraumatic stress disorder

neurofeedback

### A tale of two targets: Examining the differential effects of posterior cingulate cortex- and amygdala-targeted fMRI-neurofeedback in a PTSD pilot study

2023-11-28

Lieberman JM, Rabellino D, Densmore M, Frewen PA, Steyril D, Scharnowski F, Th  berge J, **Hosseini-Kamkar N**, Neufeld RWJ, Jetly R, Frey BN, Ros T, Lanius RA, **Nicholson AA**

*Frontiers in Neuroscience*

[Read the paper](#)

posttraumatic stress disorder

brain imaging

### Machine learning models predict PTSD severity and functional impairment: A personalized medicine approach for uncovering complex associations among heterogeneous symptom profiles

2023-11-27

Park AH, Patel H, Mirabelli J, Eder SJ, Steyril D, Lueger-Schuster B, Scharnowski F, O'Connor C, Martin P, Lanius RA, McKinnon MC, **Nicholson AA**

*Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*

[Read the paper](#)

COVID-19

moral injury

posttraumatic stress disorder

### Canadian respiratory therapists who considered leaving their clinical position experienced elevated moral distress and adverse psychological and functional outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic

2023-11-22

D'Alessandro-Lowe AM, Ritchie K, Brown A, Easterbrook B, Xue Y, Pichtikova M, Altman M, Beech I, Millman H, Foster F, Hassall K, Levy Y, Streiner DL, **Hosseiny F**, **Rodrigues S**, Heber A, O'Connor C, Schielke H, Malain A, McCabe RE, Lanius RA, McKinnon MC

*Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention in Canada: Research, Policy and Practice*

[Read the paper](#)

brain imaging

fMRI

meta-analysis

### Adverse life experiences and brain function: A meta-analysis of functional magnetic resonance imaging findings

2023-11-01

**Hosseini-Kamkar N**, Varvani Farahani M, Nikolic M, Stewart K, Goldsmith S, Soltaninejad M, Rajabli R, Lowe C, Nicholson AA, Morton JB, Leyton M

*JAMA Network Open*

[Read the paper](#)

COVID-19

moral injury

health care workers

### The mediating roles of workplace support and ethical work environment in associations between leadership and moral distress: A longitudinal study of Canadian health care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic

2023-09-29

Plouffe RA, Nazarov A, Heesters AM, Dickey CC, Foxcroft L, **Hosseiny F**, Le T, Lum PA, Nouri MS, Smith P, Richardson JD

*Frontiers in Psychology*

[Read the paper](#)

moral injury

public safety personnel

### Towards a holistic model of care for moral injury: An Australian and New Zealand investigation into the role of police chaplains in supporting police members following exposure to moral transgression

2023-09-11

Phelps AJ, Madden K, Carleton RN, Johnson L, Carey LB, **Mercier JM**, Mellor A, Baills J, Forbes D, Devenish-Mearns P, **Hosseiny F**, Dell L

*Journal of Religion and Health*

[Read the paper](#)

[List of all published research »](#)

*Research Compass* is published twice yearly by the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families.

Questions, comments or suggestions? Contact us:



[atlasresearch@theroyal.ca](mailto:atlasresearch@theroyal.ca)

## CONTACT US



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