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Public opinion of the Armed Forces in Canada, U.K. and the U.S.

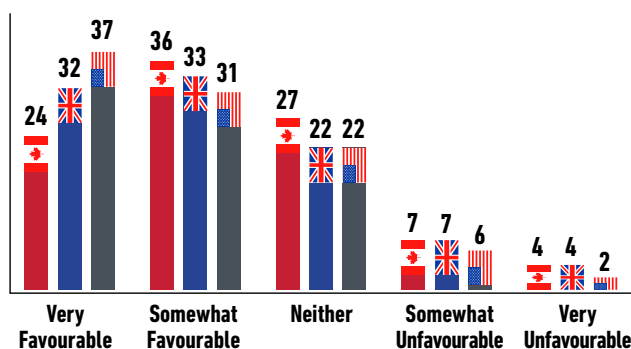
Alyson L. Mahar, Rachael Gribble, Alice B. Aiken, Christopher Dandeker, Bobby Duffy, Glenn Gottfried, Simon Wessely and Nicola T. Fear

Public opinion of the military impacts morale of active and ex-service members, generates financial backing for military support services and influences political decision-making. Little is known about how the Armed Forces are perceived internationally, or about public understanding of the issues they may face while serving or after leaving service. This infographic summarizes results of a survey conducted by Ipsos MORI and the King's Centre for Military Health Research exploring public opinion of the Armed Forces in Canada, Great Britain, and the United States.

1

Public opinion of the Armed Forces was favourable across countries surveyed. The most favourable opinions were reported in the United States followed by Great Britain (GB) and Canada. Public opinion of the Armed Forces was consistently higher than other occupations across countries. One to two percent of respondents did not have an opinion.

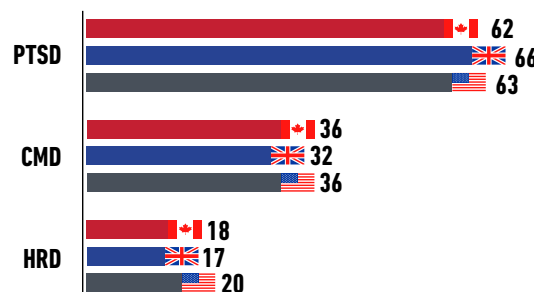
OPINION OF THE ARMED FORCES



2

The study identified differences in public perception of current Armed Forces members across countries, however opinions on key items were in a similar range. All countries believe that PTSD is more prevalent among military members compared to the general population and are less convinced of higher rates for other conditions like high risk drinking (HRD) or common mental disorders (CMD).

PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT ARMED FORCES MEMBERS

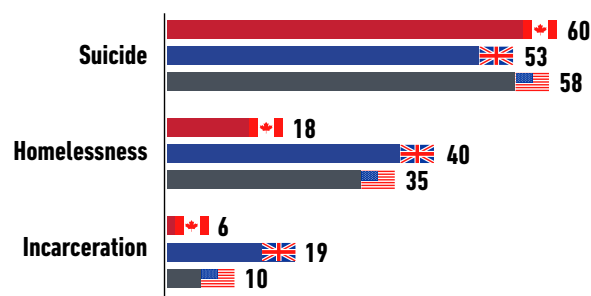


"More common in Armed Forces members" (%)

3

Public perception of suicide, homelessness and incarceration rates in former Armed Forces members compared to the general population varied across countries. Possible explanations include differences in media coverage, charitable giving campaigns, government policy, and true differences in prevalence rates.

PERCEPTIONS OF FORMER ARMED FORCES MEMBERS

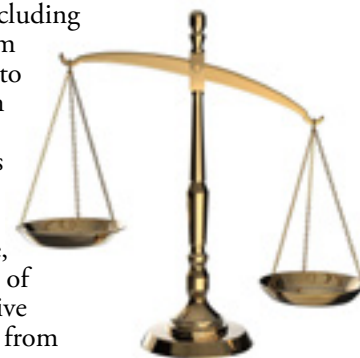


"More likely in former Armed Forces members" (%)

4

How do public opinions compare to the facts? This question is difficult to answer for a number of reasons, including a lack of data from

the general population to make comparisons with current and previous Armed Forces members and differences in the methods used across countries. For example, the one year prevalence of PTSD in Canadian active service personnel ranges from 2.8 to 5.3 %.¹



This data is not available for the general population, but the lifetime prevalence of PTSD has been estimated at 5.3% for Canadian men.² Similar measurement challenges have been experienced in GB and the US.³⁻⁵ The authors are currently analyzing these data in more detail to better understand public opinion of the Armed Forces internationally.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

None declared.

CONTRIBUTORS

All authors conceived, designed, researched and drafted the research submitted as a poster to the CIMVHR Forum 2016. ALM, RG, and AA participated in developing the infographic content. Graphics and layout of the infographic were conceived, designed and illustrated by Mike Schaub and Brock Ostrom.

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