

F. THE AFTERMATH OF THE PERSIAN GULF WAR: MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AMONG IRAQI-AMERICAN VETERANS

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Iraqi American veterans of the Persian Gulf War who are refugee immigrants in the United States are a neglected population in terms of mental health treatment. The host of losses and traumas they have endured make them particularly vulnerable to maladies such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression. In our pilot study on a small group of exiled Iraqi-American refugees, we examined some of the variables present in other research on US veterans of the Persian Gulf War. We hypothesized that Iraqi refugees' symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety would be reported with greater frequency and at higher levels than those of US veterans; that PTSD would be correlated with both depression and anxiety measures; and that subjects' overall symptom profiles

would be similar to those of other refugee groups from combat situations.

Results indicated high levels of each of the diagnostic categories, with PTSD sufferers conjointly assessing with elevated levels of the outcome variables as compared to their non-PTSD counterparts. The fact that more than half of the subjects met the criteria for PTSD was not surprising. This outcome suggests that Iraqi-American veterans of the Persian Gulf War may suffer from PTSD at much higher rates than their American military counterparts. This outcome is consistent with the elevated levels of PTSD diagnosed among some Arab-American populations. In addition, it is likely that Iraqi-American refugees' pre-and-post immigration traumas interact with their combat experiences. Implications for research and practice need to be explored.

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