

## **AMMA abstract**

### **An International Comparison of approaches to Health Surveillance in Military Populations**

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Historically the long term health impacts of overseas military service have been investigated retrospectively, usually in a context of veterans seeking recognition and compensation for adverse outcomes potentially associated with service.

Internationally the focus is now shifting to one of prospective studies commencing prior to or shortly after return from overseas deployment with repeated measurement of health outcomes over regular intervals.

This prospective longitudinal approach is more rigorous in terms of identifying causal relationships between deployment exposures and outcomes. It also enables active surveillance so that emerging patterns of health outcomes can be responded to in a timely manner through prevention and / or early intervention.

This presentation will compare the methodology being used in such studies by the United Kingdom, the USA and Canada with the methodology that is being developed within the Deployment Health Surveillance Program in Australia. Comparisons will be made of the study populations that have been selected, the sampling approach, the data sources used and the time frames for data collection.

Some of the differences in approach identified include focus on particular deployments and use of routinely collected data. The comparisons will also be made in the context of the size and operational tempo of the particular Defence Force. Lessons to be learnt in the Australian context will be drawn from the analysis.