

**Title:**

Analysis of self report symptoms reported by the Australian Defence Force in the Near North Area of Influence Health Studies

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**Abstract**

*(to be no longer than 500 words)*

**Background / Objectives**

A number of international studies have reported on the prevalence and patterns of symptoms in military populations deployed to different locations. The results of three Cross-sectional studies of Australian Defence Force (ADF) deployments to the Solomon Islands, Bougainville and East Timor between November 1997 and December 2005 will be used to assess the reported health symptoms in these samples.

**Methods**

Survey participants were asked to complete a symptoms checklist, which consisted of 67 items. Data are represented graphically to compare the prevalence of self reported symptoms between deployed and non deployed exposure groups. The prevalence of specific symptoms was compared using logistic regression and the difference in the total number of symptoms reported between exposure groups was assessed using negative binomial models.

**Results**

In each study the most common symptoms recorded in the deployed groups were Fatigue, Feeling unrefreshed after sleep and Sleeping difficulties. Overall Solomon Islands and Bougainville veterans did not report more symptoms than their respective comparison groups. However, the prevalence of symptoms was generally higher in East Timor veterans than the comparison group.

**Conclusions**

The deployment to East Timor included both warlike and non-warlike operations. In comparison, the deployments to Solomon Islands and Bougainville were predominantly peace keeping operations. The results are discussed in this context and compared with international studies of different deployments which have utilized similar techniques.

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