HOSTILITY PATTERN AMONG TERRITORIAL ARMY PERSONNEL

Maj ABHIJIT CHAKRAVARTY*, Capt (TA) RAJIV GUPTA+,
Maj (TA) SUBASH GUPTA#

ABSTRACT

A comparative study of hostility and direction of hostility was carried out on 26 Territorial Army personnel, 23 regular Army personnel, 23 patients with minor depression and 30 controls. No statistically significant difference in scores on any of the hostility subscales was found between the two groups of Army personnel and controls. The depressive group showed significantly high scores on self-criticism, guilt and total hostility as compared to the Territorial Army personnel. The difference in these intro-punitive subscales (self-criticism and guilt) points to less proneness to depression in Indian Territorial Army personnel. Direction of hostility was found to be more extropunitive in regular Army and Territorial Army personnel as compared to normal group, which might be an outcome of military training.

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Introduction

Military life is radically different from civilian life. Transition from civilian to military life particularly during war will carry many stressors in the form of heightened anxiety and fear of conflict with the enemy forces. Territorial Army personnel, who are civilians with limited periodic military training, will have to suddenly adapt themselves to military life during war. An Israeli study during the brief period of invasion of Lebanon between Jan to Sep 1982 (1) showed that units operating in combat-support where involvement in combat may fluctuate from boring safety to terrifying attacks, are at high risk of psychiatric morbidity. The Territorial Army units are comparable to such units as per their war time role.

It is necessary for a soldier to mobilise and exteriorise aggression in order to cope adequately with the enemy in combat. Excessive feeling of guilt over killing an enemy or letting down a comrade may lead an intro-punitive soldier to severe remorse which may

ultimately lead to reactive or endogenous depression.

In this study an attempt has been made to answer questions :-

1. Does different modes of training (part-time or on regular basis) produce any difference in hostility index between Territorial and regular Army personnel ?
2. Are Territorial Army personnel more prone to depression ?

Material and Methods

The study was conducted at Rohtak, Haryana which is a non-military station. Twenty six Territorial Army personnel belonging to GH (TA) Rohtak and twenty-three regular Army personnel posted at local NCC units and BRO Rohtak (only those who volunteered to take the test) were given a Hostility and Direction of Hostility Questionnaire (HDHQ) (2). The control group consisted of 30 civilian employees of Rohtak Medical College Hospital whereas the minor depressive sample was taken from a study conducted by one of us (3).

* Registrar GH (TA) Rohtak (now posted at MH Nasirabad); + Lecturer, Deptt of Psychiatry; # Bio-Statistician, Rohtak Medical College Hospital. Rohtak, Haryana 124 001.

HDHQ is a questionnaire consisting of 51 questions. Each question has to be answered in true and false manner. It has 5 subscales, in addition to the total hostility and direction of hostility scores.

These are 'self criticism' (SC) and 'guilt' (G) as measures of intro-punitiveness, and 'acting out hostility' (AH), delusional projection of hostility (PH) and 'criticism of others' (CO) as measures of extropunitiveness. Direction of hostility 'D' is calculated as $D = (2SC + G) - (AH + CO + PH)$ and Total hostility (TH) as $(SC + G + AH + CO + PH)$. The HDHQ is stated to be highly reliable and is widely used in India [4].

Results

No statistically significant difference was observed between the Territorial Army and the regular Army sample (Table 1). Similarly, no statistically significant difference was observed between the Territorial Army and the control group.

However, significant differences have been found between the Territorial Army and the minor depressive sample over the intro-punitive subscales (self-criticism and guilt) as well as in total hostility score. The depressive group had higher scores on intro-punitive subscales (SC and G) whereas extropunitive subscales (AH, CO and PH) did not show significant difference. Total hostility score was also found to be significantly high in the depressive sample. Mean scores on Direction of Hostility (D) were found to be highest in the regular Army followed by Territorial Army personnel but it was not statistically significant.

Discussion

On comparing the various subscales of the Hostility Questionnaire (Table 1), no significant difference was observed between the Territorial Army and the regular Army sample. The regular army sample taken in this test was basically involved in imparting training to the NCC cadets or recruiting duties and was not directly involved in the process of battle preparedness. Moreover, being posted at a

non-military station, the perceived stress of war was comparatively less. The regular army personnel here were leading more of civilian life style as they were away from the cantonment area and hence not subjected to stringent discipline and training of a regular Army unit. The comparison between the two samples would have been meaningful if carried out among personnel of an Infantry Battalion (TA), which have a sizeable number of both regular and Territorial Army soldiers and are being frequently embodied for operational tasks.

Comparison of the various subscales of the same questionnaire (Table 1) also fails to show any significant difference between the Territorial Army sample and the control group. Territorial Army personnel taken in our study were affiliated to AMC (TA) and as per their present operational role, they were secure in their knowledge that they will not be required to move to the battle-field during war. Moreover, training imparted to the AMC (TA) personnel, being voluntary and limited (30 days/year) may not have created the necessary stimulus for adequate development of desired personality traits e.g. enhanced positive aggressive behaviour (main trait under study) which may be required by a soldier posted at a regular Army or Territorial Army (Inf) unit.

Comparing the findings of Territorial Army sample with that of the minor depression (Table 1), significant differences were noted in the intro-punitive subscales and total hostility score. It indicates that Territorial Army personnel are not prone to depression. This is at variance with the findings of Birtch-nell *et al* (5) on a study conducted on British TA personnel whereby using 28 item General Health Questionnaire and the Beck Depression Inventory, they observed very high prevalence of depression among British TA personnel of both sexes. However, our study can not be compared as the exact composition of the British TA sample and amount of exposure to battle stress were not discussed.

In view of the mean scores of Direction of

TABLE 1

Comparison of hostility between territorial army and other groups and control group

Sr.No	Group	n		SC	G	AH	CO	PH	TH	D
(a)	Territorial Army (TA)	26	Mean X	3.42	2.07	3.92	6.34	3.00	19.4	-4.55
			SD	1.85	1.36	2.27	1.64	1.62	6.18	4.54
(b)	Minor depression (MD)	22	Mean X	6.40	3.78	4.95	6.72	3.59	25.45	1.27
			SD	2.70	1.87	2.49	2.23	2.11	7.53	7.17
(c)	Regular Army (RA)	23	Mean X	3.65	2.13	4.69	7.26	3.34	21.08	-6.33
			SD	1.66	1.25	1.94	1.65	2.14	6.03	3.77
(d)	Control group (CG)	30	Mean X	4.87	2.13	3.87	5.87	3.33	18.4	-2.33
			SD	2.63	1.61	1.73	2.47	2.55	7.57	4.85
Comparison (t-test one tailed)										
(i)	a vs b	(TA vs MD)		p <0.001	p <0.001	*	*	*	p <0.001	*
(ii)	a vs c	(TA vs RA)		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
(iii)	a vs d	(TA vs CG)		*	*	*	*	*	*	*

n = Sample size AH = Acting out hostility TH = Total hostility

SC = Self criticism CO = Criticism of others D = Direction of hostility

G = Guilt PH = Delusional projection of hostility

* Values not significant at 5% level of significance ie p >0.05

Hostility, we may conclude that extropunitiveness is more in regular Army (-6.33) and Territorial Army (-4.55) than that in the control group (-2.33) ($p > 0.05$, not significant). This indicate that extropunitiveness may have resulted from military training and is a desired trait for Army personnel to cope up well with the many stressors brought on by a war. We have also found that there was no evidence of high prevalence of psychiatric morbidity in present Territorial Army sample, unlike the British TA sample.

It must be kept in mind that present findings are from one station in North India and may not be representative of Indian Army as a whole. Moreover present study suffered from certain other limitation i.e. use of single test, small sample size and nature of the station. It will be interesting to carry out a simi-

lar study with more comprehensive tests, on a larger sample of both Regular and Territorial Army personnel.

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