



ARMED  
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REHABILITATION  
OUTCOME  
STUDY

## ***Pain following combat injury in male UK military personnel deployed to Afghanistan***

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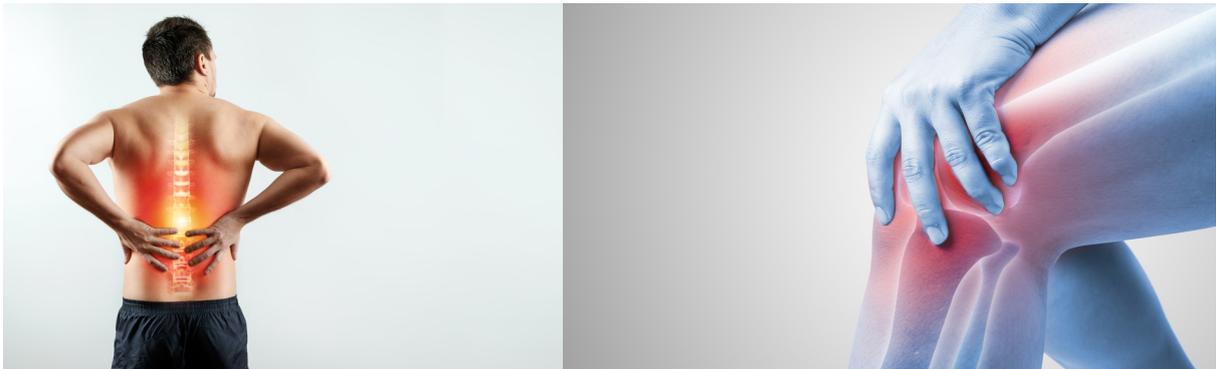
### ***What is the ADVANCE Study?***

The ADVANCE Study investigates the physical and psycho-social outcomes of battlefield casualties in the long-term. The study has 1,145 participants who served in the Afghanistan War of 2002-2014. Half of the cohort have sustained serious battlefield injuries, and the other half are the comparison group of non-injured servicemen. The participants attend 6 study visits over a 20-year period.

### ***What does this piece of ADVANCE research look at?***

We looked at how many of the ADVANCE participants reported living with pain. Pain is a leading cause of disability worldwide, and affects up to a quarter of the general population. Chronic pain can lead to poor mental health, social isolation, and make it harder or impossible to participate even in everyday activities.

Military personnel may be at higher risk of living with pain after their service, especially if they have been injured on the battlefield or had to undergo amputation as a result of their injury. Here, we look at the overall pain reported by participants, as well as back or joint pain, and pain related to amputations (pain in the stump or phantom limb pain – the feeling of experiencing pain where the amputated limb used to be).



### ***What are the findings?***

We found that overall, about one in five of the participants lived with “impactful” pain, meaning pain that effects daily life, like keeping you up at night, or making you reconsider what activities you take part in. As we expected, more participants who sustained an injury lived with pain compared to those without, but, against our expectations, those who lost a limb did not live with more overall pain compared to those who did not have an amputation.

Those living with pain more frequently reported living with post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety.

### ***What do the findings mean?***

A large part of the participants of the ADVANCE cohort experience pain, and this often overlapped with mental health issues. It is therefore important to understand more about the type of pain experienced and the impact of being in pain in order to develop ways to better manage pain after injury. Our results highlight that amputation does not necessarily lead to more pain compared to injury without amputation, but we will need to follow participants over time to understand if pain changes many years after amputation and injury.

*Many thanks to the ADVANCE cohort for taking part and to all of the ADVANCE funders for their generous support.*