

## **RESTRICTED**

### **ABSTRACT**

The Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a leading morbidity among the combat military personnel globally. It affects their wellbeing and leads to hindering the overall military capability and combat effectiveness of armed forces of a country. Prevalence of PTSD had been reported as high as 17.1% among post conflict settings. Depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation and personality disorders are known to be associated with combat related PTSD.

The aim of the study was to determine the prevalence of PTSD among combat military personnel currently serving in the Sri Lanka Army, to identify psychological, occupational and socio demographic issues faced by them and to determine their impacts on PTSD in post conflict. A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted to determine the prevalence of combat related PTSD among 871 combat soldiers who are presently serving in the Sri Lanka Army using a well-structured questionnaire with PTSD Check List – Military Version. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted by using semi – structured questionnaire, among soldiers who were reporting sick to the psychiatric clinic at the Army Hospital – Narahenpita.

The prevalence of PTSD among combat soldiers in the Sri Lanka Army was 8.7%. The occurrence of sexual harassment, physical assault and experience of imprisonment among the combat military personnel were recorded as 9.6%, 23.0% and 4.4% respectively. Addiction to alcohol, smoking and cannabis were reported as 18.0%, 54.5% and 5.6% respectively. The length of service at Sri Lanka Army being less than 20 years, presence of family member with mental illness, consumption of alcohol and cannabis were having statistical significant high level of PTSD among the combat military personnel with P-values <0.05. The prevalence of PTSD and addiction to alcohol, smoking and cannabis were high among the combat military personnel in the Sri Lankan Army. A large scale screening programme for PTSD among the Sri Lanka Armed Forces should be conducted to identify the individual with PTSD and appropriate treatment should be provided, while maintaining robust system of enhancing the physical and mental standards of soldiers in the Sri Lanka Army.