

Are peacekeeping-missions
inevitably stressful?

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Background

- What have we done and why
- What does our experience tell us
- Do we have the right basic assumptions?

Question

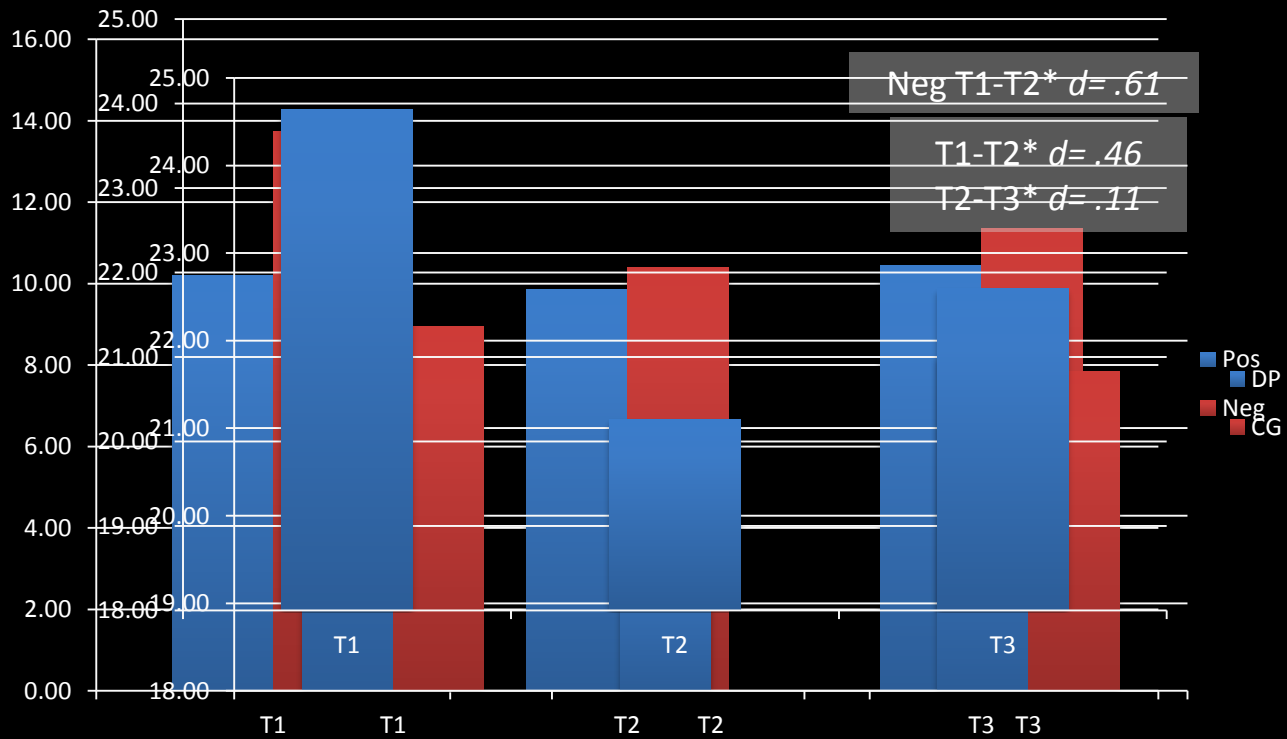
- Will perceived stress change across the deployment phases, if so in what direction.
- If there is a build-up of stress during deployment, will it affect cognition or stress hormones?
- Hypothesis: Stress will accumulate during deployment, resulting in increased perceived stress, higher levels of stress hormones, lower cognitive performance. (in contrast to our experience)

Method.

- 40 soldiers (guard and escort) from FS 26, ISAF Afghanistan. Control group of 20 soldiers from the Life Guard Regiment.
- Longitudinal design pre- T1, during- T2, and at homecoming T3. (control only T1 and T3)
- Tests:
 - Perceived Stress Scale PSS14
 - d2, Delta-R, Working- and Episodic memory.
 - Cortisol DHEAs (Dehydroepiandrosteron)

Results

- PSS14

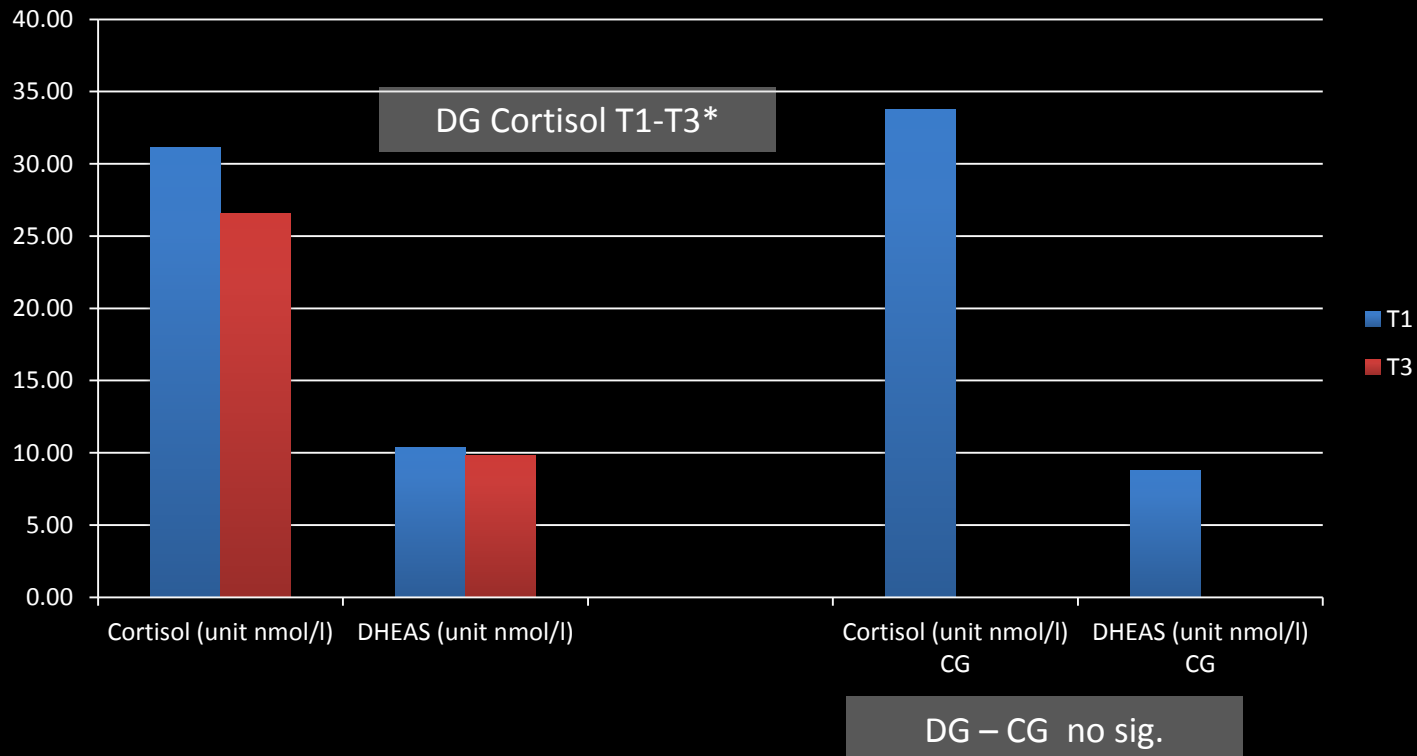


Results

- Cognitive performance.
 - No significant changes over time for any of the groups.

Results

- Biomarkers



Discussion

- Hypothesis: not supported e.g. no “build up” of stress over time.
- Results is in the opposite direction – lower stress during deployment (also compared to CG)
- Anticipatory stress pre-deployment? no significant difference compared to “normal” levels CG.
- Possibly several stress mitigating factors at play, group cohesion, sense of control (in ones position) etc.
- Balance between hassles and uplifts.
- Take home message: more focus on positive factors (protective/rewarding)

Questions?