# **Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)**

#### May 2025

## Fact Sheet: Data on Veterans Using VA Health Care

CSPEAR provides timely epidemiologic information on VA health care users. This fact sheet presents summary data to inform a broad community of VA leaders, investigators, and clinicians as they consider how best to address the needs of Veterans.

**Introduction**: Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a sleep disorder, which is characterized by episodes of complete collapse of the airway or partial collapse with an associated decrease in oxygen saturation or arousal from sleep<sup>1</sup>. In the United States, it has been reported that 25% to 30% of men and 9% to 17% of women meet the criteria for obstructive sleep apnea<sup>2,3</sup>. The prevalence of sleep-related breathing disorders like OSA among Veterans had an almost four-fold increase from Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 to FY 2018<sup>4</sup>. While Polysomnography (PSG) is the gold standard for OSA diagnosis, the STOP-BANG Questionnaire is an easy -to-use screening tool (not a diagnostic tool) to identify people who might have mild, moderate, and severe OSA<sup>5</sup>.



**Methods:** Data were extracted from the VA Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW)<sup>6</sup>, a national database that integrates clinical and administrative information for use by the VHA and CSPEAR<sup>7</sup>. We applied: i) SQLServer full-text search to scan large amounts of notes for keywords near the STOP-BANG scores, and ii) regular expression to extract the values. The population served by VHA health care includes both Veterans and non-Veterans. We obtained the number of Veteran users of the VHA in each fiscal year 2012 through 2023 using CSPEAR's denominator table<sup>7</sup>, and then identified those with OSA.

**Definitions:** For data presented in this Fact Sheet, an <u>OSA diagnosis</u> is based on 9th and 10th revisions of International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9 and ICD-10) codes in at least one outpatient visit or one inpatient hospitalization: ICD-9-CM 327.2\* as well as ICD-10-CM G47.3\*. Visit the <u>Centralized Interactive Phenomics Resource (CIPHER)</u> for more information on the <u>OSA phenotype</u>. <u>STOP-BANG scores</u> (0-2 low; 3-4 medium; and 5-8 high) were extracted from CDW's clinical notes.

**Notes:** This work was conducted under CSPEAR's operational access to VA data. This material is the result of work supported with resources and the use of facilities at the VA Cooperative Studies Program Epidemiology Center in West Haven, CT. The contents do not represent the views of VA or the US Government.

#### Visit CSPEAR's website or contact CSPEAR@va.gov for more information.

**Suggested citation:** VA Cooperative Studies Program Epidemiology Analytics Resource. OSA Fact Sheet: Data on Veterans Using VA Health Care. Cooperative Studies Program, Office of Research and Development, Department of Veterans Affairs. 2024.

### Fast Facts

- In FY 2023, an estimated 19% (1,260,044/6,584,695) of Veteran VHA users met criteria for OSA diagnosis, highlighting the challenge to optimize OSA health outcomes.
- OSA affects all races, sexes and ages, but the condition is more common among Veterans between 50 and 59 years old.
- STOP-BANG scores are often mentioned in notes that are related to pre-operative planning and sleep studies.





Office of Research and Development Cooperative Studies Program

