Introduction: Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event [1]. Affecting about 7–8% of all Americans, PTSD can be a severe, debilitating condition marked by distress and impairment in life tasks [2, 3]. PTSD is associated with increased risk for other serious health problems. Veterans are disproportionately affected, with a lifetime prevalence reportedly up to 32% [4]. Several treatments are available for this condition, and some people can overcome PTSD [2], but an estimated 5–17% of combat-exposed Veterans experience persistent PTSD [3].

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

VHA Projects on PTSD

VHA supported more than 50 studies in FY 2018 that focus directly on PTSD, helping to improve the future quality of life for Veterans with this condition. Below are some selected studies.

Clinical Science R&D
- representative project: CBT for PTSD in Veterans with Co-occurring Substance Use Disorders.

Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) R&D
- representative project: Genomics of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder among Veterans. (Study CSP#575B).

Health Services R&D
- representative project: Validation of the PTSD Primary Care Screen.

Rehabilitation R&D
- representative project: An Integrative Technology Approach to Home-based Conjoint Therapy for PTSD.

Office of Rural Health R&D
- representative project: Office of Rural Health webSTAIR Program.

References and resources


The PTSD prevalence rate here is defined as the percentage of VHA Veterans who have PTSD in FY 2019. PTSD prevalence rates vary by age and sex, while rates appear most similar among 25-44 and 65-84 years old.

Prevalence rate of PTSD among different races in FY 2019 (“other/multiple” race not shown).

The map shows how the 729,920 Veteran users of the VHA with PTSD are distributed across wide geographic regions.