

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

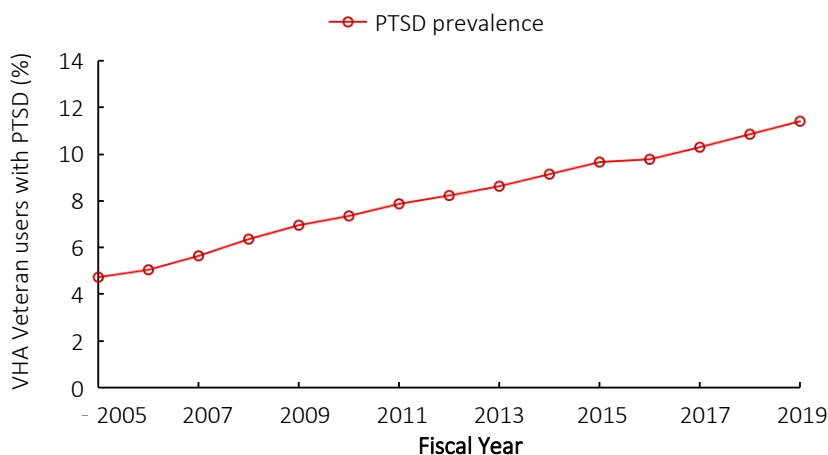
March 2020

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: 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].

**Yearly Prevalence of PTSD
Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 – 2019**



Yearly prevalence (%) of PTSD in Veteran users of the VHA. In FY 2019, 729,920 Veterans with PTSD used VHA for receiving their PTSD specific care.

Fast Facts

- An estimated 729,920 Veteran users of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) (approximately 12% of the VHA Veteran patient population) with PTSD received their PTSD specific care in FY 2019, representing significant resource use.
- PTSD affects all races, sexes and ages, but the condition is more common among adults 25 to 64 years old.
- In FY 2018, VHA supported more than 50 studies to better understand, diagnose and ultimately find new treatments for, PTSD.

Methods: Data were extracted from the VA Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) [5], a national database that integrates clinical and administrative information in the VHA; and other VHA data sources (e.g., [6]). The population served by VHA health care includes both Veterans and non-Veterans. While protecting privacy, we first identified the number of Veteran users of the VHA in each fiscal year 2005 through 2019, and then identified those with a PTSD diagnosis.

Definitions: A confirmed PTSD diagnosis is based on 9th and 10th revisions of International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9 and ICD-10) codes in two outpatient visits or one inpatient hospitalization: ICD-9-CM 309.81 as well as ICD-10-CM F43.10, F43.11 and F43.12. The yearly PTSD Prevalence is the proportion of Veteran VHA users with the confirmed PTSD diagnosis on record during the given FY.

Notes: This work was conducted under the auspices of 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.

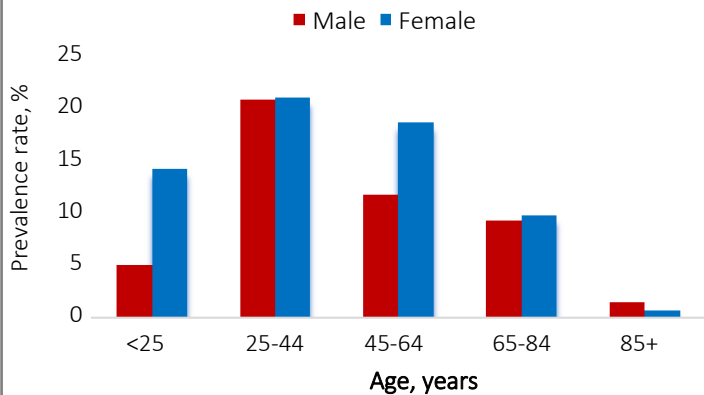
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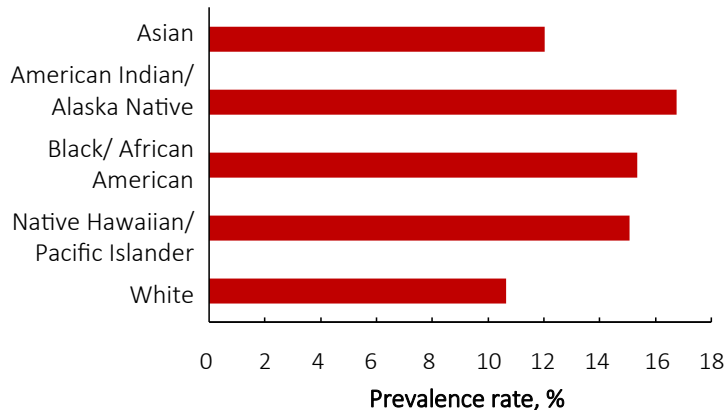
CSPEAR Fact Sheet for PTSD — continued

PTSD Prevalence Rate by Age and Sex in FY 2019



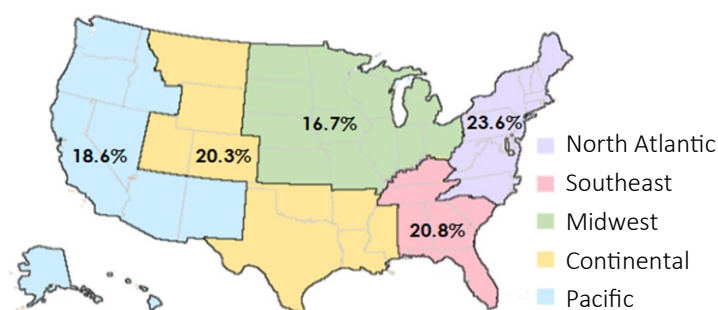
The PTSD prevalence rate here is defined as the percentage of VHA Veterans who have PTSD in FY 2019. PTSD prevalence rates vary by age and sex, while rates appear most similar among 25-44 and 65-84 years old.

PTSD Prevalence Rate by Race in FY 2019



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

Geographic Distribution of PTSD in FY 2019



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

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

[1] National Institute of Mental Health. Accessed March 2020 at <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml>.

[2] National Center for PTSD. Accessed March 2020 at https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_adults.asp.

[3] Radhakrishnan K, et al. [Genomics of posttraumatic stress disorder in veterans: Methods and rationale for Veterans Affairs Cooperative Study #575B.](#) *Int J Methods Psychiatr Res.* 2019 Mar;28(1):e1767. doi: 10.1002/mpr.1767.

[4] Maynard C, et al. [Characteristics of Younger Women Veterans with Service Connected Disabilities.](#) *Heliyon.* 2019 Mar 1;5(3):e01284.

[5] Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW). Accessed March 2020 at https://www.hsrdr.research.va.gov/for_researchers/vinci/cdw.cfm.

[6] National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics.