

# VA Cooperative Studies Program Epidemiology Analytics Resource (CSPEAR)

## Traumatic Brain Injury

### Fact Sheet: VA Screening and Evaluation Data on Iraq and Afghanistan Era Veterans Using VA Health Care

March 2020

**Introduction:** This fact sheet is the second in a two-part series on traumatic brain injury (TBI). Part 1 presents data on all-cause TBI among all Veterans who receive medical care within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).<sup>1</sup> Part 2 summarizes VA TBI screening and evaluation data collected on a subset of this population. TBI cases reported here include injuries sustained by Veterans during their deployment to Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND).

#### Methods

**Population:** OEF/OIF/OND era Veterans aged 18-110 years who used VHA health care during fiscal year (FY) 2019

**Data Source:** VA TBI screening and evaluation database accessed through the VA Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW)<sup>2</sup>

**Analyses:** This supplement presents the number (%) of Veterans diagnosed with deployment-related TBI through the VA TBI screening and evaluation process and the number (%) of Veterans who completed key steps in the process.

#### Background

- Starting in April 2007, all Veterans deployed for OEF/OIF/OND must be screened for TBI upon entry into VHA care.<sup>3</sup> The screening aims to identify Veterans who sustained TBIs during deployment and who experienced symptoms in the past week.
- Veterans screen positive if they were previously diagnosed with TBI during deployment or if they answer 'yes' to all 4 questions in the screening tool. Those who screen positive are referred for a comprehensive TBI evaluation (CTBIE) by TBI specialists to confirm or rule out a TBI diagnosis.<sup>3</sup>
- The Office of Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services collects TBI screening and evaluation data through the TBI clinical reminder, TBI screen, and CTBIE.
- These data only capture TBIs sustained by Veterans who were screened and received a diagnosis through a CTBIE. Not reflected in the data are injuries endured by Veterans who:
  - Did not serve in the OEF/OIF/OND era
  - Were not deployed for OEF/OIF/OND
  - Were referred but did not receive a CTBIE
  - Were injured before or after deployment

#### Summary of VA TBI Screening and Evaluation Data among OEF/OIF/OND Era Veterans who used VHA Health Care in Fiscal Year 2019

1,596,726 OEF/OIF/OND Era Veteran VHA Users in FY 2019

1,387,422 (86.9%) Veterans screened for deployment-related TBI at any point in time

189,411 (11.9%) Veterans screened positive and were referred to CTBIE

172,315 (10.8%) Veterans completed CTBIE

113,249 (7.1%) Veterans confirmed for deployment-related TBI diagnosis

#### References and Resources

- CSPEAR Traumatic Brain Injury Fact Sheet: Data on Veterans Using VA Health Care. Cooperative Studies Program, Office of Research and Development, Department of Veterans Affairs. 2020.
- VHA Data Portal. Traumatic Brain Injury Screening and Evaluation Data. Available at: <https://vawww.vhadataportal.med.va.gov/DataSources/TraumaticBrainInjury.aspx>. Accessed October 1, 2019. (Link is internal to VA)
- VHA. VHA Directive 1184: Screening and Evaluation of TBI in OEF, OIF, and OND Veterans. Available at: [http://www.va.gov/vhapublications/viewpublication.asp?pub\\_id=5376](http://www.va.gov/vhapublications/viewpublication.asp?pub_id=5376). Updated April 6, 2017. Accessed September 20, 2019.

Visit [www.research.va.gov/topics](http://www.research.va.gov/topics) for information about VA research on **TBI** and other key topics relating to Veterans' health.

Visit [CSPEAR's website](http://www.research.va.gov) or contact [CSPEAR@va.gov](mailto:CSPEAR@va.gov) for more information.

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