

<http://www.ajph.org/news/newsrel.shtml>



HOME HELP FEEDBACK SUBSCRIPTIONS ARCHIVE SEARCH

QUICK SEARCH: [advanced]

AJPH News Release

The articles below will be published online July 16, 2009, at 4 p.m. (ET) by the *American Journal of Public Health* under “First Look” at http://www.ajph.org/first_look.shtml, and they are currently scheduled to appear in the September 2009 print issue of the Journal. “First Look” articles have undergone peer review, copyediting and approval by authors but have not yet been printed to paper or posted online by issue. The *American Journal of Public Health* is published by the American Public Health Association, www.apha.org, and is available at www.ajph.org. To stay up to date on the latest in public health research, sign up for new Journal content e-mail alerts at <http://www.ajph.org/subscriptions/etoc.shtml?ck=nck>.

American Journal of Public Health Highlights:

- **Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan at high risk for mental health disorders**
- **Long-term health effects linked with relationship violence in women’s adulthood**
- **Higher number of road fatalities and injuries occur after repeal of federal limit controls**

Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan at high risk for mental health disorders

Mental health diagnoses increased substantially after the start of the Iraq War among specific subgroups of returned veterans entering Veterans’ Administration (VA) health care, reports a new study.

Researchers determined the prevalence and correlates of mental health diagnoses among 289,328 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans entering VA health care from 2002 to 2008 using national VA data. Of those, 106,726 veterans received mental health diagnoses, including 62,929 who were diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder and 50,432 who were diagnosed with depression. Women were at higher risk for depression than were men; yet men had over twice the risk for drug use disorders.

The researchers suggest, “Targeted screening and early intervention with evidence-based treatments tailored to the problems of particular subgroups of veterans may be the best defense against chronic mental health and social and occupational problems.” [From: “Trends and Risk

Factors for Mental Health Diagnoses Among Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Using Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care, 2002-2008.” Contact: Karen Seal, MD, MPH, San Francisco VA Medical Center, Karen.Seal@va.gov].

Long-term health effects linked with relationship violence in women’s adulthood

Experiences with relationship violence beyond the formative and developmental years of childhood and adolescence can have far-reaching effects on the health status of disadvantaged urban women, a new study shows.

The researchers use data from the Welfare, Children, and Families project (1999 and 2001), a probability sample of 2402 low-income women with children living in disadvantaged neighborhoods in Boston, Chicago and San Antonio, to examine the long-term health consequences of relationship violence in adulthood. The results of the study demonstrate that psychological aggression predicted increases in psychological distress, whereas minor physical assault and sexual coercion predicted increases in the frequency of intoxication.

The study’s authors conclude, “Future research must consider the mechanisms through which relationship violence in adulthood might lead to changes in health status. If we are going to develop effective strategies for recognizing and treating women who have experienced relationship violence, we need to know as much as possible about how these experiences undermine health.” [From: “The Long-Term Health Consequences of Relationship Violence in Adulthood: An Examination of Low-Income Women from Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio.” Contact: Terrence D. Hill, University of Miami, tdh@miami.edu].

Higher number of road fatalities and injuries occur after repeal of federal limit controls

A new study points to evidence that the 1995 repeal of federal limit controls resulted in an increase of road fatalities and injuries.

Researchers examined the long-term effects of the 1995 repeal of federal speed limit controls on road fatalities and injuries in fatal crashes. They did so by assessing the changes in number of fatalities and injuries in fatal crashes between 1995 and 2005 on rural interstates, where all U.S. states have raised speed limits since the repeal, and on urban interstates and non-interstate roads. They found a 3.2 percent increase in road fatalities attributable to the raised speed limits on all road types in the United States. Rural interstates had the highest increases at 9.1%, whereas the increase on urban interstates was 4.0%. Furthermore, researchers estimated that 12,545 deaths and 36,583 injuries in fatal crashes were attributable to these increase in speed limits across the United States.

The study’s researchers stated, “We suggest that the lower overall change in fatalities and injuries on the higher-speed roads mean not that higher travel speeds are safer but that the relative increase in travel speeds was less extreme on these roads.” [From: “Long-Term Effects of Repealing the National Maximum Speed Limit in the United States.” Contact: Lee Friedman, Social Policy Research Institute, Skokie, Ill., lfriedman@tspri.org].

