

Bloomberg Businessweek

Available on the iPad

EXECUTIVE HEALTH October 27, 2010, 12:00 EST

Mental Health Issues Differ for U.S. Male, Female Vets

Depression more likely among women, PTSD more common in men, study finds

WEDNESDAY, Oct. 27 (HealthDay News) --Mental health issues confronted by U.S. veterans returning from the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan differ by gender, new research suggests.

Female veterans are more likely to have a diagnosis of depression than are their male counterparts, according to a study of nearly 330,000 veterans who received health care from the Veterans Administration from 2002 to 2008. They are also generally younger than their male counterparts and more likely to be black.

In contrast, male veterans were found to be more prone than their female peers to post-traumatic stress disorder and/or alcohol abuse.

The analysis was led by study author Shira Maguen of the San Francisco VA Medical Center. She and her colleagues reviewed data on more than 329,000 veterans of "Operation Enduring Freedom" and "Operation Iraqi Freedom" obtained from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

"In an era in which a greater proportion of women have served in the U.S. military in a much wider variety of military occupational specialties than ever before, our results contribute to a better understanding of the characteristics of women seeking VA health care," the study team noted in a news release.

The authors also said it was important to understand how differences between men and women might affect mental health outcomes. "Gender differences are important to consider as the Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense continue to expand and strengthen programs to evaluate and provide care for a new generation of returning veterans," they added.

Maguen and her colleagues report their observations in the Oct. 21 online issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*.

More information

For more on veterans and mental health, visit the [U.S. National Institutes of Health](#).

--Alan Mozes

SOURCE: *American Journal of Public Health*, Oct. 19, 2010, news release.

Copyright © 2010 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.