



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

“Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Risk of Dementia among U.S. Veterans”

Yaffe, K.; Vittinghoff, E.; Lindquist, K.; Barnes, D.; Covinsky, K. E.; Neylan, T.; Kluse, M.; Marmar, C. / [Full Report](#)

Quick Takeaway:

- Veterans diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are twice as likely to develop dementia as they age

Study:

The authors' goal of this 1997-2007 study was to determine whether PTSD was associated with an increased risk of being diagnosed with dementia. They also explored whether the association could be linked to clinical depression, medical comorbidity or head injury. Using the VA National Patient Care Database, the authors selected 181,093 veterans who were older than 55 and who were not currently diagnosed with dementia. Of the selected, 53,155 veterans had a diagnosis of PTSD over two visits at the VA Medical Center. The average time for veterans to achieve a diagnosis of dementia was seven years.

Findings:

The authors determined that those diagnosed with PTSD were twice as likely to develop dementia as they aged compared to those who were not diagnosed with PTSD. The determination factor included the rate of dementia that was diagnosed through a 7-year time span. Veterans with PTSD and dementia were 10.6% of individuals while 6.6% of individuals without PTSD were diagnosed with dementia. After making adjustment to control for demographic, medical and psychiatric comorbidity factors, the authors concluded that those diagnosed with PTSD had a greater chance of being diagnosed with dementia.

Conclusion and Outlook:

The authors state that there could be numerous factors contributing to the increase of dementia for those diagnosed with PTSD. Factors include stress, cognitive functioning and differences in neurological functioning and performance. Researchers suggest that future studies need to be conducted to determine further specifics on the relationship between PTSD and dementia.

Source: Yaffe, Kristine, et al. "Post-traumatic stress disorder and risk of dementia among U.S. veterans." *Archives of General Psychiatry*. 67.10. (2010): 608-613. Web. 1 July 2014. <<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2933793/>>.