



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

“Association between Women Veterans’ Experiences with VA Outpatient Healthcare and Designation as a Women’s Health Provider in Primary Care Clinics” Bastian et al./ [Full Report](#)

Quick Takeaways:

- Women veterans seeing VA Designated Women’s Health Providers (DWHP) report significantly better experiences with outpatient care.
- Female patients who see Nurse Practitioners have better overall experiences than those who see MDs.

Study:

This study analyzed data from the VA Survey of Healthcare Experience of Patients (SHEP) using the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) patient-centered medical home (PCMH) survey from March 2012 through February 2013. The study measured women veterans’ patient experience at VA medical centers and clinics with designated women’s health providers (DWHPs) compared to patient experiences with non-DWHPs.

Researchers controlled for patient characteristics, organization structure, and the process of care to evaluate 3,147 providers on characteristics including age, sex, and position (MD, Nurse Practitioner, or Physician’s Assistant). Overall experience was divided into six components: access of care, communication, shared decision making, self-management, comprehensiveness, and office staff.

Findings:

Women veterans receiving care from VA DWHPs reported significantly better experiences with overall outpatient care than patients receiving care from Non-DWHPs. Significantly higher satisfaction with DWHP providers was found in five of the six components of care – the only exception being office staff. Patients also reported a higher level of care satisfaction from nurse practitioners rather than medical doctors or physician assistants. A number of patient and process characteristics were associated with better care experiences including increased age, increased length of time seeing the provider, better self-reported physical health, better mental health, and non-white race. The gender of the provider was not associated with better patient experience.

Conclusion:

Specialized outpatient care from designated staff may increase satisfaction for many women veterans receiving VA outpatient care. Further research is required to determine the relationship, if any, between patient satisfaction and quality of care received. Additional research could also provide insight into the differences in patient satisfaction among various providers (NPs, MDs, and PAs). In the short term, given the high satisfaction with their care, additional nurse practitioners could be hired to address medical staff shortages.