



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

“Are Male Veterans at Greater Risk for Nonemployment than Nonveterans?”

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Quick Takeaways:

- Analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Studies data shows that veterans do not have higher risks of nonemployment than nonveterans.
- The risk of nonemployment among veterans compared to nonveterans varied greatly by age, deployment era, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status prior to deployment.

Summary:

The study investigated the relative risk of nonemployment (defined to include unemployment, disability, or departure from the workforce) among veterans as compared with nonveterans. Researchers used data from the 1989, 1999, and 2003 Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Studies (CPS) to compare veterans and nonveterans by age, race/ethnicity, and an indicator of past service in the armed forces. The sample size from all three studies consisted of between 20 – 25 million surveyed veterans. The study calculated the percentage of male veterans and nonveterans who were not employed for each category as well as calculated the risk ratio for each age-race/ethnicity category. The age categories were divided to reflect specific periods of service (e.g. WWII era).

Findings:

Overall, veterans did not have a higher risk of nonemployment than nonveterans. Age was a factor – older age groups of both veterans and nonveterans had consistently higher rates of nonemployment. Younger veterans and nonveterans also had higher rates of nonemployment than the age groups that followed. Researchers found higher rates of nonemployment for minorities, especially blacks, regardless of veteran status. The data was not sufficiently conclusive to point to either race or age as the leading contributing factor to nonemployment among veterans. Researchers suggested that socioeconomic differences among recruits might be a greater contributing factor to nonemployment after service than combat exposure.

Conclusion:

The varied data and fluctuating rates of nonemployment among veterans and nonveterans of different ages across racial ethnic lines suggests socioeconomic status prior to enlistment may be an important indicator of nonemployment after service. While veterans do not have a higher rate of nonemployment than the civilian population overall, the numbers reflect a continuing challenge. Continued support, especially targeted approaches for those groups at highest risk, is essential to ensuring veterans reintegrate successfully into the labor market.