



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

“Traumatic Brain Injury, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, and Pain Diagnoses in OIF/OEF/OND Veterans”

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Quick Takeaways:

- Half of all Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) veterans receiving care from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) were being treated for at least one condition in the polytrauma triad: traumatic brain injury (TBI), Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and head and neck pain.
- TBI, PTSD, and pain are often comorbid, with 6% of all veterans treated for all three.
- Use of VHA increased by more than 40%, but the proportion of polytrauma triad treatment remained steady.

Study:

Researchers examined data for all inpatient and outpatient services provided by VHA facilities during 2009-2011 for veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and Operation New Dawn (OND), comprising 613,391 veterans. From this sample, researchers analyzed the number of veterans suffering from the polytrauma triad of TBI, PTSD, and pain (in the head neck or shoulders), both separately and comorbid.

Findings:

Researchers found that 51.8% of OIF/OEF/OND veterans suffered from at least one of the polytrauma triad conditions. Separately, 9.6% of veterans had TBI, 29.3% were diagnosed with PTSD, and 40.2% were diagnosed with pain. Veterans suffering from all three conditions comprised 6% of the studied population. Utilization of VHA services increased by 44% over the period of study, but the proportion of veterans suffering from the full polytrauma triad did not significantly change.

Conclusion:

About half of all OIF/OEF/OND veterans receiving treatment from VHA facilities are treated for TBI, PTSD, or pain in the head, neck, and shoulders. Researchers found that a diagnosis of TBI was often comorbid PTSD or pain, with 6% of veterans having all three.