

**Women in the Armed Services Now
2017 VA RESEARCH**

WOMEN IN THE ARMED SERVICES



VHA-ENROLLED VETERANS

Mean Age

Women
48

Men
63

Marriage



College Education



Employment

70% of women veterans
of working age
are employed

MUSCULOSKELETAL CONDITIONS (OEF/OIF)

- Associated with length and number of deployments
- Women were more likely than men to have problems with:
 - Back
 - Musculoskeletal system
 - Joints
- These odds increased each year (for women compared with men) in years 1 to 7 after deployment.



REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Infertility among OEF/OIF Veterans

Women

have increased odds of seeking medical help for infertility



Men

- OEF/OIF female veterans with any mental health diagnosis had significantly higher prevalence of nearly all categories of reproductive diagnoses ($p < .0001$)
- Prevalence of disease outcomes increases for women with:
 - PTS
 - Depression
 - Comorbid PTSD and depression(p for trend $< .0001$ for all outcomes)

COMMON DISORDERS RESEARCH

Mental Health

PTS, Depression
MST
Suicide
Disordered Eating

Reproductive Health

Pregnancy
Pre-term Risks
Infertility

Urogenital Health

Musculoskeletal Disorders

MENTAL HEALTH

OEF/OIF Gender Differences

Women were more likely to report depression symptoms.

Men were more likely to report problem drinking.

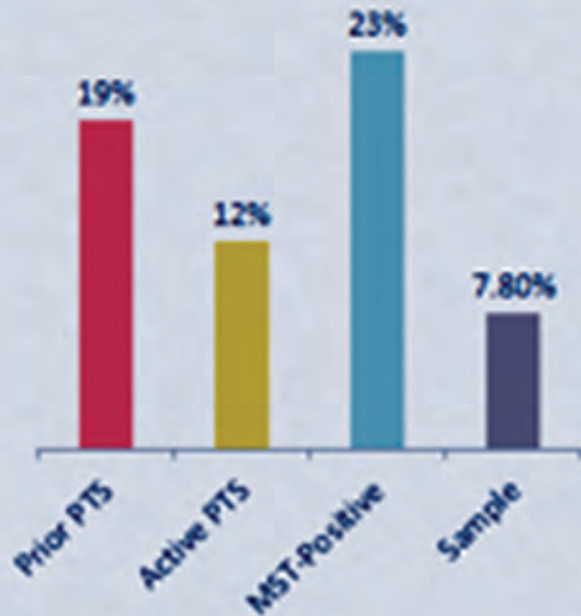
No gender differences with respect to PTS symptoms.

Disordered Eating



- OEF/OIF Veterans with PTS and depression were at the greatest risk of being either obese without weight loss or overweight or obese and continuing to gain weight.
- Binge-eaters were more likely to report higher depression and anxiety ($p < 0.0001$)

PRE-TERM PREGNANCIES



- Women veterans with active PTS (diagnosed within a year) are more likely to have a pre-term delivery (<37 weeks)
- May be linked to higher rates of
 - Hypertension
 - Diabetes
 - Asthma
 - Comorbid MH conditions

URINARY SYSTEM FUNCTION

Women in active duty are often exposed to conditions that may increase their risk of urogenital health disorders.

Poor hygiene

Decreased access
to care and
bathrooms

Postponed
urination

Fluid restriction



Deployed women have high rates of urogenital complaints.

Urinary tract
infections

Pelvic organ
prolapse

Urinary
incontinence

Bladder pain
syndrome

Nearly 1 in 4 female Veterans returning from overseas military service have overactive bladder symptoms.

18.4% of deployed women experienced urinary tract infections during deployment.



THANK YOU