



Analysis of VA Health Care Utilization among Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) Veterans

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September 2011



Current DoD Roster of Recent Veterans

- **Evolving roster development by DoD Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)**
 - In September 2003, DMDC developed an initial file Veterans who had been deployed to the Iraqi and Afghan theater of operations using proxy files: Active Duty and Reserve Pay, Combat Zone Tax Exclusion, and Imminent Danger Pay.
 - In September 2004, DMDC revised procedures for creating periodic updates of the roster and now mainly utilizes direct reports from service branches of Veterans who served in OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom), OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom), and OND (Operation New Dawn) troops.
 - Office of Public Health is working with DMDC to improve the accuracy and completeness of the roster and the variables provided.

Current DoD Roster of Recent Veterans

- **Latest update of roster**
 - Provided to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Environmental Epidemiology Service on July 12, 2011
- **DoD's OEF/OIF/OND deployment roster**
 - Contains list of Veterans who have left active duty and does not include currently serving active duty personnel
 - Does not distinguish between OEF, OIF or OND Veterans
 - Roster only includes separated OEF/OIF/OND Veterans with out-of-theater dates through May 2011
 - Beginning with the 3rd Quarter FY 2009 report, Veterans who received health care but subsequently died in-theater are being included in the quarterly analysis.
 - The number of individuals who died in-theater through 3rd Quarter FY 2011 is 5,444

Updated Roster of OEF, OIF, and OND Veterans Who Have Left Active Duty

- **1,353,627** OEF, OIF, and OND Veterans have left active duty and become eligible for VA health care since FY 2002
 - **735,164 (~54%)*** Former Active Duty troops
 - **618,463 (~46%)** Reserve and National Guard

*Percentages reported are approximate due to rounding.

Use of DoD Roster of Veterans Who Have Left Active Duty

- The DoD roster is compared to VA's electronic inpatient and outpatient health records in which the standard ICD-9 diagnostic codes are used to classify health problems in order to determine which OEF/OIF/OND Veterans accessed VA health care as of June 30, 2011.
- The data available for this analysis are mainly administrative data obtained from Veterans' VA medical records and are not based on a review of patient records or a confirmation of diagnoses. However, every clinical evaluation is captured in VA's computerized patient record. The data used in this analysis are appropriate for health care planning purposes because the ICD-9 administrative data reflect the use of health care resources.
- These administrative data have to be interpreted with caution because they ***only apply to those OEF/OIF/OND Veterans who have accessed VA health care.*** These data do not represent all 1,353,627 OEF/OIF/OND Veterans who have become eligible for VA health care since FY 2002 or the approximately 2.3 million troops (as of 06/30/2011) who have served or are serving in the two theaters of operation since the beginning of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan¹.

¹ Source: [CTS Deployment File Baseline Report](#), Defense Manpower Data Center. Provided to EES by the Armed Force Health Surveillance Center, 08/10/2011

Use of DoD Roster of Veterans Who Have Left Active Duty (2)

- Because VA health data are not representative of the Veterans who have not accessed VA health care, epidemiological studies are required to answer specific questions about the health of all OEF/OIF/OND Veterans.
- Analyses based on this updated roster are not directly comparable to prior reports because the denominator (number of OEF/OIF/OND Veterans eligible for VA health care) and numerator (number of Veterans enrolling for VA health care) change with each update.
- This report presents data from VA's health care facilities and does not include Vet Center data or DoD health care data.
- These health care data are “***cumulative totals***” since FY 2002 and do not represent data from any single year.
- The numbers provided in this report should not be manipulated to provide new data without first checking on the validity of the manipulations with VA's Office of Public Health.

VA Health Care Utilization from FY 2002 through 2011 (3rd Qtr.) among OEF, OIF, and OND Veterans

- ***Among all 1,353,627 separated OEF/OIF/OND Veterans***
 - ***711,986 (~53%)**** of total separated OEF/OIF/OND Veterans have obtained VA health care since FY 2002 (cumulative total)
 - ***667,708 of 711,986 (~94%)**** have been seen only as outpatients by VA
 - ***44,278 of 711,986 (~6%)**** have been hospitalized at least once in a VA health care facility

*Percentages reported are approximate due to rounding.

VA Health Care Utilization for FY 2002-2011 (3rd Qtr.) by Service Status

- **735,164 Former Active Duty in DMDC roster**
 - **391,722 (~53%)*** have sought VA health care since FY 2002 (cumulative total)
- **618,463 Reserve/National Guard in DMDC roster****
 - **320,264 (~52%)*** have sought VA health care since FY 2002 (cumulative total)

*Percentages reported are approximate due to rounding.

**May include both former and current Reserve/National Guard Members

Comparison of VA Health Care Requirements

Of the cumulative total of 711,986 OEF/OIF/OND Veterans who utilized VA health care between FY 2002 and FY 2011 (through 3rd Qtr.), 445,497 Veterans accessed care during the past year.¹ This represents about 7% of the ~6 million individuals who received VA health care during FY 2010.²

¹ Qtr 4 FY 2010 (July 1, 2010) through Qtr 3 FY 2011 (June 30, 2011)

² The most recent full fiscal year for which data are available. Data obtained from Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Planning, <http://vaww4.va.gov/vhaopp/vast2.asp>

Frequency Distribution of OEF, OIF, and OND Veterans by VISN Providing Treatment

Treatment Site		<i>OEF-OIF-OND Veterans Treated at a VA Facility*[†]</i>	
		Frequency	%
VISN 1	VA New Healthcare System	30,260	4.3
VISN 2	VA Healthcare Network Upstate	19,299	2.7
VISN 3	VA New York/New Healthcare System	26,261	3.7
VISN 4	VA Stars & Stripes Healthcare System	36,562	5.1
VISN 5	VA Capitol Health Care System	25,105	3.5
VISN 6	VA Mid-Atlantic Healthcare System	47,550	6.7
VISN 7	VA Network	56,251	7.9
VISN 8	VA Sunshine Healthcare Network	55,385	7.8
VISN 9	VA Mid-South Healthcare Network	41,716	5.9
VISN 10	VA Healthcare System of	22,938	3.2
VISN 11	Veterans in Partnership Healthcare Network	32,702	4.6
VISN 12	VA Health Care System	37,720	5.3
VISN 15	VA Heartland Network	30,344	4.3
VISN 16	South Health Care Network	66,217	9.3
VISN 17	VA Heart of Health Care Network	54,591	7.7
VISN 18	VA Southwest Healthcare Network	39,392	5.5
VISN 19	VA Rocky Mountain Network	33,931	4.8
VISN 20	VA Northwest Network	41,398	5.8
VISN 21	VA Sierra Pacific Network	35,560	5.0
VISN 22	VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network	61,694	8.7
VISN 23	VA Health Care Network	42,169	5.9

* Veterans can be treated in multiple VISNs. A Veteran was counted only once in any single VISN but can be counted in multiple VISN categories. The total number of OEF-OIF-OND Veterans who received treatment (n = 711,986) was used to calculate the percentage treated in any one VISN.

† Percentages reported are approximate due to rounding.

Demographic Characteristics of OEF, OIF and OND Veterans Utilizing VA Health Care

	% OEF/OIF/OND Veterans* (n = 711,986)		% OEF/OIF/OND Veterans* (n = 711,986)
<i>Sex</i>		<i>Unit Type</i>	
Male	88.1	Active Duty	55.0
Female	11.9	Reserve/Guard	45.0
<i>Birth Year Cohort[†]</i>		<i>Branch</i>	
1980 – 1995	45.8	Air Force	12.4
1970 – 1979	26.1	Army	61.0
1960 – 1969	20.9	Marines	13.5
1950 – 1959	6.3	Navy	13.0
1926 – 1949	1.0		
		<i>Rank</i>	
		Enlisted	91.2
		Officer	8.8

* Percentages reported are approximate due to rounding.

[†] A range of birth years is now being reported rather than a range of ages to capture with greater precision the age distribution of OEF/OIF/OND Veterans utilizing VA health care. This began with the 3rd Qtr FY 2009 report.

Diagnostic Data

- Veterans of recent military conflicts have presented to VA for outpatient and inpatient care with a wide range of medical and psychological conditions.
- Diagnoses have encompassed more than 8,000 discrete ICD-9 diagnostic codes.
- The three most common diagnoses of Veterans were musculoskeletal ailments (principally joint and back disorders), mental disorders, and “Symptoms, Signs and Ill-Defined Conditions.”
- As in other outpatient populations, the ICD-9 diagnostic category, “Symptoms, Signs and Ill-Defined Conditions,” was commonly reported. This is not a diagnosis of an unknown syndrome or unusual illness. This ICD-9 code includes symptoms and clinical findings that are not coded elsewhere. It is a diverse, catch-all category that is commonly used for the diagnosis of outpatient populations. It encompasses more than 160 sub-categories and primarily consists of common symptoms that do not have an immediately obvious cause during a clinic visit or of laboratory test abnormalities that do not point to a particular disease process and may be transient.

Frequency of Diagnoses* among OEF/OIF/OND Veterans

Diagnosis (Broad ICD-9 Categories)**	Frequency	Percent***
Infectious and Parasitic Diseases (001-139)	107,256	15.1
Malignant Neoplasms (140-209)	9,367	1.3
Benign Neoplasms (210-239)	44,290	6.2
Diseases of Endocrine/Nutritional/ Metabolic Systems (240-279)	220,268	30.9
Diseases of Blood and Blood Forming Organs (280-289)	24,894	3.5
Mental Disorders (290-319)	367,749	51.7
Diseases of Nervous System/ Sense Organs (320-389)	310,360	43.6
Diseases of Circulatory System (390-459)	147,267	20.7
Disease of Respiratory System (460-519)	182,783	25.7
Disease of Digestive System (520-579)	253,450	35.6
Diseases of Genitourinary System (580-629)	102,661	14.4
Diseases of Skin (680-709)	147,617	20.7
Diseases of Musculoskeletal System/Connective System (710-739)	396,552	55.7
Symptoms, Signs and Ill Defined Conditions (780-799)	359,998	50.6
Injury/Poisonings (800-999)	200,846	28.2

*Includes both provisional and confirmed diagnoses.

**These are cumulative data since FY 2002, with data on hospitalizations and outpatient visits as of June 30, 2011; Veterans can have multiple diagnoses with each health care encounter. A Veteran is counted only once in any single diagnostic category but can be counted in multiple categories, so the above numbers and percentages add up to greater than 711,986.

*** Percentages reported are approximate due to rounding.

Frequency of Mental Disorders¹ among OEF/OIF/OND Veterans since 2002²

Disease Category (ICD-9 290-319)	Total Number of OEF/OIF/OND Veterans³
PTSD (ICD-9 309.81) ⁴	197,074
Depressive Disorders (311)	147,659
Neurotic Disorders (300)	126,673
Affective Psychoses (296)	89,001
Alcohol Dependence Syndrome (303)	41,409
Nondependent Abuse of Drugs (305) ⁵	28,776
Specific Nonpsychotic Mental Disorder due to Organic Brain Damage (310)	25,038
Special Symptoms, Not Elsewhere Classified (307)	24,936
Drug Dependence (304)	21,309
Sexual Deviations and Disorders (302)	20,931

¹ Includes both provisional and confirmed diagnoses.

² These are cumulative data since FY 2002. ICD-9 diagnoses used in these analyses are obtained from computerized administrative data. Although diagnoses are made by trained health care providers, up to one-third of initial diagnostic codes may not be confirmed because the diagnosis is provisional, pending further evaluation.

³ The total will be higher than the 367,749 unique patients who received a diagnosis of a possible mental health disorder. A Veteran may have more than one mental health disorder diagnosis and each diagnosis is entered separately in this table.

⁴ This row of data does not include a) information on PTSD from VA's Vet Centers, b) data from Veterans not enrolled for VA health care, or c) Veterans with a diagnosis of adjustment reaction (ICD-9 309) but not PTSD (ICD-9 309.81).

⁵ This category currently excludes Veterans who have a diagnosis of a) tobacco use disorder only, ICD-9 305.1 (n=99,580); b) alcohol abuse only, ICD-9 305.0, (n=24,943); or both tobacco use disorder and alcohol abuse, ICD-9 305.0 and 305.1, (n=19,668).

Summary

- Recent OEF, OIF and OND Veterans are presenting to VA with a wide range of medical and psychological conditions.
- The 711,986 OEF, OIF, and OND Veterans who have accessed VA health care do not constitute a representative sample of all OEF/OIF/OND Veterans.

For example, the fact that 44% of VA patient encounters were coded as being related to diseases of the nervous system/sense organs does not indicate that 44% of all recent Veterans are suffering from this health problem. Only epidemiological studies can evaluate the overall health of OEF/OIF/OND Veterans.

- Percentages of VA health care utilization by recent OEF/OIF/OND Veterans may be influenced by combat Veterans' enhanced access to VA health care enrollment (in January 2008, this authority was extended from 2 years to 5 years post discharge) and exemption from co-pay charges for any health problem possibly related to their military service.

Summary (2)

- Also, an extensive outreach effort has been developed by VA to inform these Veterans of their benefits, including briefings for returning Veterans who have left active duty, phone calls to OEF/OIF/OND Veterans not currently in VA health care to inform them of benefits and link them to local VA services, educational events at colleges/universities, returning Service Members welcome home events, a comprehensive Web site at (<http://www.oefoif.va.gov>), and the mailing of a personal letter from VA's Secretary informing Veterans of their benefits
- When a combat Veteran's enhanced health care eligibility expires, the Veteran is moved to their appropriate priority group and charged all co-payments as applicable. If their financial circumstances place them in Priority Group 8, their enrollment in VA will be continued, regardless of the date of their original VA application.