



Health Disparities among Veterans in Oregon

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Background

- Rede Group received contract from the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs
 - Forecast the need for nursing care among Oregon veterans for the next 20 years.
- No data available on the need for nursing care among veterans.
- Had to use data on the need for nursing care among the general population.
- Do veterans have generally better or worse health than the general population?

Background

- Over 300,000 veterans living in Oregon
- 1 in 10 Oregon adults are veterans
- Age distribution of veterans is much different than the general population
- The largest number of veterans are from Vietnam Era
 - Currently, around 65-74 years old

Veterans - Gender

| | % Male |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| All veterans | 91% |
| Veterans 65 years and older | 96% |

Age by Veteran's Status

| | Veterans | General population |
|-----------------|----------|--------------------|
| 18-34 years old | 7% | 29% |
| 35-64 years old | 44% | 51% |
| 65 or older | 39% | 20% |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% |

Methodology

- 2012 Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
- Analyses were stratified by age and gender, since veterans are more likely to be older and male than the general population
- “Have you ever served on active duty in the United States Armed Forces, either in the regular military or in the National Guard or military reserve unit?”

Health Risks by Veteran's Status

| | Males - 65 years and older | |
|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| | <u>Veterans</u> | <u>Non-Veterans</u> |
| Smoke cigarettes | 9% | 8% |
| Obese | 27% | 26% |

Diagnoses by Veteran's Status

| | Males - 65 years and older | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| | <u>Veterans</u> | <u>Non-Veterans</u> |
| Diabetes | 22% | 19% |
| Cancer (other than skin) | 22% | 16% |
| Stroke | 11% | 7% |
| Depression | 15% | 12% |

Veterans from a different era

- Now we will look at male veterans 50-64 years old
- Mostly veterans who entered the military after the Vietnam Era, when the military draft had ended

Health Risks by Veteran's Status

| | Males – 50-64 years old | |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| | <u>Veterans</u> | <u>Non-Veterans</u> |
| Smoke cigarettes | 24% | 17% |
| Obese | 38% | 29% |

Diagnoses by Veteran's Status

| | Males – 50-64 years old | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| | <u>Veterans</u> | <u>Non-Veterans</u> |
| Diabetes | 17% | 12% |
| Cancer (other than skin) | 6% | 5% |
| Stroke | 5% | 3% |
| Depression | 28% | 19% |

Younger Veterans

- Male veterans under 50 years old had better outcomes for some health indicators than non-veterans.
- This could result from the requirement that recruits meet certain health benchmarks to enter the military.

Health Disparities among Veterans

Health disparities among veterans could result from:

- Differences among people who enter the military
- The impacts of military service.

Elderly veterans in Oregon face significant health disparities and efforts to achieve health equity should include working with this population.

- Some veterans receive health care and other services using federal veterans' benefits.
- Majority of veterans obtain healthcare services from the non-veteran healthcare system.

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