

TITLE: Veteran Status, Disability Status, and Healthcare Use: Findings from the 2015-2018 National Health Interview Survey

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: No

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Researchers, providers, administrators, policy makers

ABSTRACT: Statement of Problem: In the United States (US), Veterans and non-Veterans with disabilities may have access to different healthcare and disability benefits. Study aim: Compare the prevalence of different disabilities between Veterans and non-Veterans and examine the relationship between Veteran status, disability status, and healthcare use. Methods: Using data from the National Health Interview Survey (2015-2018; n=118,859), we constructed variables to represent physical disabilities and social/emotional disabilities and used ordered logistic regression to examine Veteran and disability status on healthcare utilization in the past year (0,1,2, 3+ visits). Conclusions: 10% of participants were Veterans. Compared to non-veterans, Veterans: were predominantly male, white, and older compared to non-Veterans (49% of Veterans versus 17% of non-Veterans age 65 and older); were similar in level of education and income; reported higher levels of physical disability (52% versus 35%, respectively) and social/emotional disabilities (17% versus 12%, respectively). In preliminary analyses, Veterans status and disability status were significantly associated with healthcare use. Implications: We observed systematic differences between US Veterans and non-Veterans with and without disabilities associated with their healthcare use, suggesting that there may be access to care barriers, and warranting attention by policy makers and health systems serving Veterans and those with disabilities.

OBJECTIVE(S): Compare disability type and prevalence in Veterans and non-Veterans. Discuss factors related to healthcare use for disabled Veterans, non-disabled Veterans, disabled non-Veterans, and non-disabled non-Veterans.
