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VA, DOD study a major breakthrough for understanding PTSD

WASHINGTON — Researchers from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DOD) recently released findings of a new study called Prospective Post-Traumatic Stress disorder Symptom Trajectories in Active Duty and Separated Military Personnel, which examines Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms in Veterans, compared with active-duty populations.

This is the first known study comparing PTSD symptom trajectories of current service members with those of Veterans, and is the product of a collaborative effort from VA and DOD researchers analyzing data from the [Millennium Cohort Study](#) (MCS), the largest prospective health study of military service members.

According to [VA's National Center for PTSD](#), the PTSD rate among Vietnam Veterans was 30.9 percent for men and 26.9 percent for women. For Gulf War Veterans, the PTSD rate was 12.1 percent. Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans had a PTSD rate of 13.8 percent.

"Knowing there are similarities in how PTSD affects service members and Veterans makes it easier to pinpoint which treatments are the best to control the condition," said Dr. Edward Boyko, an epidemiologist and internist at the [VA Puget Sound Health Care System](#) in Washington state, and VA's lead researcher on the Millennium Cohort Study.

Officials involved with the project said they are hoping the collaboration will improve the understanding of Veterans' health needs, relative to their experiences in service.

"The data that MCS researchers have been collecting since 2001 is incredibly valuable for both the DOD and VA," said Dr. Dennis Faix, director of the Millennium Cohort Study and preventive medicine physician. "Going forward, working with VA will allow both agencies to make sure we are getting the best information to develop a comprehensive understanding of the continuum of health in current and former service members."

The results of the joint VA DOD study will appear in the [Journal of Psychiatric Research's](#) June 2017 issue. It is the first of many joint future publications expected to result from the collaboration between VA and MCS.

You can learn more about the study here: <http://millenniumcohort.org/>.

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