



ALCOHOL USE DISORDER DISPARITIES AMONG TRANSGENDER VETERANS

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INTRODUCTION

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) serves a diverse Veteran population and is committed to ensuring VHA is welcoming to all Veterans.

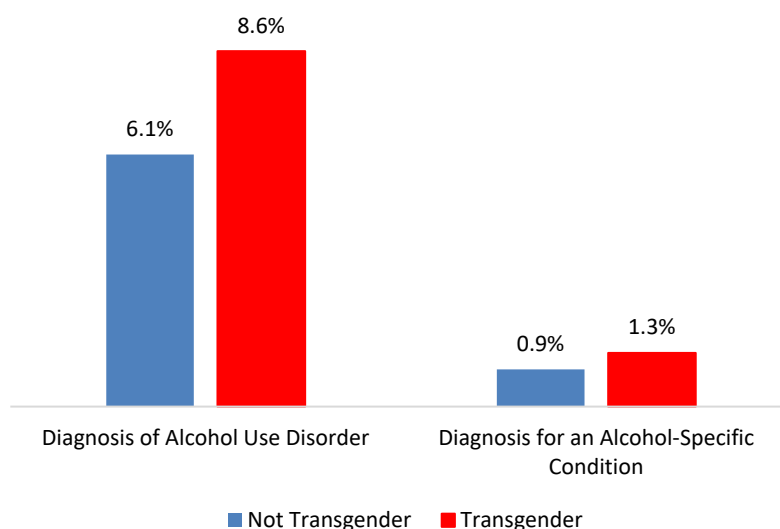
Transgender Veterans are a diverse community whose gender identities differ from sex assigned at birth. Equitable access to high-quality care for all Veterans is a major tenet of the VA healthcare mission. The Office of Health Equity (OHE) champions the elimination of health disparities and achieving health equity for all Veterans.

HEALTH DISPARITIES

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is a medical condition characterized by the inability to stop or control one's alcohol use despite experiencing consequences that have negative impacts on their social lives, work, and/or health. All Veterans are screened annually for unhealthy alcohol use. Those screening positive should receive feedback from their providers about how alcohol may adversely impact health, advice to reduce or stop drinking, and be assessed for alcohol use disorder (AUD).

VA researchers used national VA electronic medical record data to identify transgender Veterans and alcohol use outcomes for all Veterans who received care at the VA from October 1, 2009, through July 31, 2017. They found that transgender Veterans were more likely to have documented diagnoses for both alcohol use disorder and alcohol-related medical conditions (e.g., alcoholic cirrhosis) than non-transgender Veterans.

Rates of Diagnoses of AUD and Alcohol-Specific Conditions



REDUCING DISPARITIES

The Office of Health Equity supports efforts across VA working to reduce health disparities by encouraging efforts to ensure all Veterans with AUD have access to the resources and treatment they need to reduce or abstain from drinking.

The VA is a leader in delivery of evidence-based treatments for AUD. There are behavioral and pharmacologic treatments for AUD that may improve quality of life or reduce the risk of developing adverse psychosocial and health outcomes from excessive alcohol use. Transgender Veterans are particularly susceptible to the poor health outcomes associated with AUD secondary to structural and interpersonal discrimination that they may experience.

VA recommends that clinicians providing alcohol-related care use a shared decision-making approach, offering Veterans acceptance and compassion as they consider their options for making changes. These techniques focus on the Veteran's reasons for changing and openly discuss the ambivalence that often accompanies making

changes. Veterans' social context and lived experience should be incorporated in these conversations in order to enhance equity.

Transgender Veterans with an AUD are more likely to receive specialty substance use disorder care (e.g., long-term therapy) and medications for AUD than non-transgender Veterans. Though current rates of receiving care for AUD and alcohol-related conditions are higher among transgender Veterans, since the consequences of AUD disproportionately impact transgender Veterans, it is imperative that VA providers are aware of the importance of ensuring transgender Veterans receive alcohol-related care.



For more information about resources available to help get support for alcohol use, visit this [link](#).

For more information about the Office of Health Equity visit: <https://www.va.gov/healthequity/>

References

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