

Sleep Disorders Among U.S. Veterans Increasing Rapidly, Study Shows

By Paige Towers • July 19, 2016 at 7:15pm

SHARE ON FACEBOOK TWEET TUMBLR EMAIL

The first casualty of war is innocence.

. Long, patrols and the constant threat of ambush are some of the many factors keeping active soldiers awake at all hours of the night. But healthy sleep isn't just a luxury that alludes those currently serving — we've known for some time that sleep disorders are an equally serious problem for veterans after returning home, one that makes it difficult to return to normal civilian life. The precise number suffering from sleep disorders has never been fully understood. Now, however, a new 11year examination of proves that the number is far greater than many imagined.

<http://vanwinkles.com/thevalenceofsleepdisordershasriseninmilitaryveterans> 1/3

Sleep, it seems, is a close second

The new study , published in the journal SLEEP

and conducted by numerous different institutes including the Department of Veteran Affairs and the University of South Carolina, shows that the ageadjusted prevalence of sleep disorders in U.S. military veterans has risen by more than 600 percent during a roughly 11year period. Unsurprisingly, the largest

demographic of veterans who saw these increases were those diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), other mental disorders and/or those who saw combat during their deployment.

The researchers found that the prevalence of sleep disorders in veterans grew from less than one percent in 2000, to almost six percent in 2010.

The researchers compiled the electronic medical records of every US veteran who sought care at the VA from 2000 to 2010. This meant handling data for 9,786,778 veteran patients. (As of 2000, there were around 26.4 million veterans — or roughly 12.7 percent of the U.S. population.) The team then examined the data to find the prevalence of

including , , movement disorder, , and “other sleep disorders.”

<http://vanwinkles.com/the-prevalence-of-sleep-disorders-has-risen-in-military-veterans> 2/3

sleep disorders, circadian rhythm disorders parasomnias

hypersomnia insomnia, sleep apnea

When all was said and done, the VA diagnosed 751,502 individuals with at least one sleep disorder. Furthermore, the researchers found that the prevalence of sleep disorders in veterans increased from less than one percent in 2000 to almost

11/10/2016 Sleep Disorders Are Rising Rapidly Among Veterans | Van Winkle's six percent in 2010. While the most prevalent of all those sleep disorders was sleep apnea — which made up 47 percent of the diagnoses — insomnia followed close behind, making up 26 percent.

With all these diagnoses of sleep disorders in veterans, you may imagine a great deal of floating about. You'd be right, as, per the research, 91 percent of those veterans diagnosed with a sleep disorder were prescribed at least one sleep medication.

<http://vanwinkles.com/the-prevalence-of-sleep-disorders-has-risen-in-military-veterans> 3/3

Ambien

So what exactly has caused this rise in diagnoses in sleep disorders? The study itself recognized that the results may not solely represent an increase in sleep disorders; it could merely illustrate a heightened awareness of sleep disorders or the effectiveness of new training medical staff received. As always, more research is needed to determine what the rate of prevalence is versus how more likely veterans are now able to receive a medical diagnosis for their sleep condition.

Despite the uncertainties, the data clearly points to a larger issue. The diagnosing and management of sleep disorders, per researchers, may play a vital part in longterm medical care for veterans in the future.