

Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project

Agency of Human Services, Department of Health, Department of Mental Health
108 Cherry Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401

TO: Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project
Advisory Group and Interested Parties

FROM: John Pandiani, Rod McCormick and Walter Ochs

DATE: November 9, 2007

RE: Prevalence of Depression among Vermont Veterans

Following on previous brief PIP reports on the representation of armed forces veterans in CMHC caseloads,^{1,2} this week's report compares the prevalence of depression/anxiety among Vermont veterans to the prevalence of depression/anxiety among other Vermont residents. As such, this comparison provides an empirical test of an assumption stated in our November 11, 2005 PIP report: "Veterans of military service are recognized as a population with the potential for an elevated need for mental health services." This week's report is based on analysis of findings of the 2006 Vermont Department of Health Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey. The survey includes a 10-item module designed to estimate the prevalence of depression/anxiety in the general population of the state of Vermont and a question regarding active duty in the armed forces. A copy of the survey instrument is available on-line.³ Overall findings for the state of Vermont were provided in a PIP report earlier this year⁴.

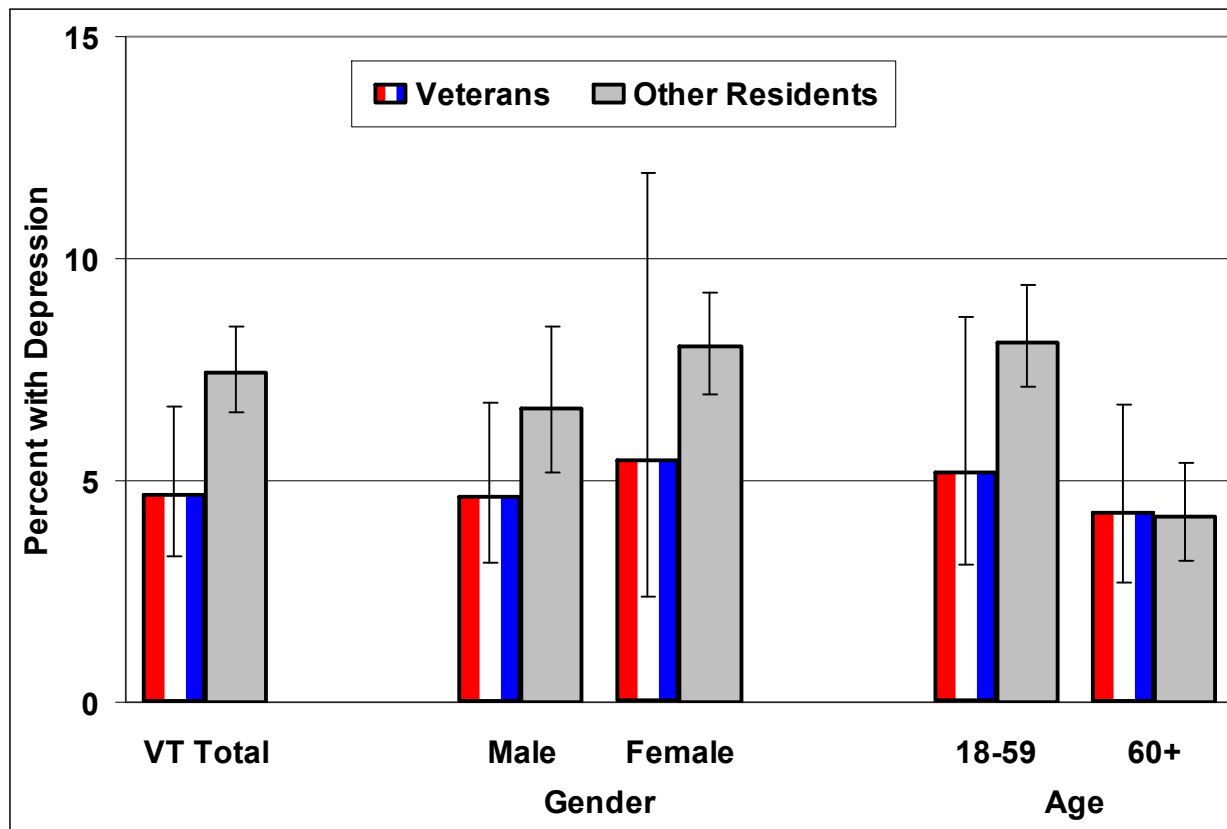
Overall, Vermont's 2006 BRFSS indicates that 14% of adult Vermont residents are armed forces veterans, including 27% of adult male residents and 2% of adult female residents. The representation of veterans in the 60+ age group was much greater than the representation of veterans in the 18-59 age group (31% vs. 9%).

As you will see, Vermont veterans are substantially less likely than other Vermont residents to report indications of depression/anxiety 4.7% vs. 7.4% respectively. This decreased prevalence of depression/anxiety among veterans was evident among men (4.6% vs. 6.6%) and women (5.5% vs. 8.0%) although these differences were not statistically significant. Finally, this decreased prevalence of depression/anxiety among veterans was evident among adults in the 18-59 age group (5.2% vs. 8.1%), but there was no difference between veterans and other Vermont residents in the prevalence of depression/anxiety in the 60+ age group.

We look forward to your questions and comments about these findings, and your suggestions for further analyses that focus on the health status of armed forces veterans or the distribution of depression/anxiety in Vermont. We can be reached at 802.863.7249 or pip@vdh.state.vt.us.

1. <http://healthvermont.gov/mh/docs/pips/2005/pip111105.pdf>
2. <http://healthvermont.gov/mh/docs/pips/2006/Pip111006.pdf>
3. <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/questionnaires/pdfques/2006brfss.pdf>
4. <http://healthvermont.gov/mh/docs/pips/2007/Pip052507.pdf>

Prevalence of Depression/Anxiety among Vermont Veterans and other Residents, 2006



	Veterans		Other Residents	
	% Depressed	95% CI	% Depressed	95% CI
VT Total	4.7	(3.3-6.7)	7.4	(6.5-8.5)
Gender				
Male	4.6	(3.2-6.8)	6.6	(5.2-8.5)
Female	5.5	(2.4-11.9)	8.0	(6.9-9.2)
Age				
18-59	5.2	(3.1-8.7)	8.1	(7.1-9.4)
60+	4.3	(2.7-6.7)	4.2	(3.2-5.4)

Analysis based on data collected by the Vermont Department of Health Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey during FY2006. The BRFSS is an on-going telephone health survey system conducted by the health department of each state. The BRFSS surveys include residences and exclude institutionalized Vermonters.