



THE VETERANS METRICS INITIATIVE (TVMI)

INTERACTIONS OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs) AND COMBAT EXPOSURE

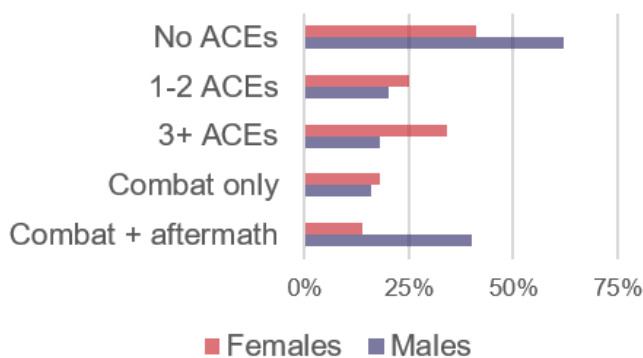
Issue 13

BACKGROUND

- In Fall 2018, a national sample of 5,844 veterans who separated within the past 25-28 months participated in the fifth wave of the TVMI survey.
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are defined as physical or emotional neglect; physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; domestic violence; and family history of mental illness or alcohol abuse.
- The "combat-related events" assessed events such as encountering land or water mines and firing one's weapon at enemy combatants. "Aftermath of war events" counts exposures like seeing civilians or someone from one's unit wounded or injured.
- These analyses compare veterans without ACEs or warfare exposure to those with such traumas.



TRAUMA PREVALENCE



PTSD

- The highest risk was among female veterans with both combat and aftermath exposure but no ACEs (10.6 times more likely to have PTSD).
- Male veterans with both combat and aftermath exposure and 3+ ACEs were 10.2 times more likely to screen for PTSD, forming the highest risk group.



ANXIETY

- Female veterans were 2.7-3.2 times more likely to have anxiety symptoms with both combat and aftermath exposure, regardless of ACEs.
- The highest risk was among male veterans with both combat and aftermath exposure as well as 3+ ACEs (4.8 times more likely to have anxiety).



DEPRESSION

- Female veterans with combat and aftermath exposure were 4.5-6.2 times more likely to have depression symptoms, with greater risk paralleling more ACEs.
- Male veterans with 3+ ACEs and exposure to only the aftermath of war were at highest risk.



ALCOHOL MISUSE

- The only significant combination resulting in probable alcohol misuse for female veterans was 3+ ACEs and both combat and aftermath exposure (4.1 times more likely).
- Male veterans with both combat and aftermath exposure were 1.3-1.6 times more likely to have probable alcohol misuse, with increasing risk paralleling increased ACEs.



ANGER ISSUES

- Female veterans with 3+ ACEs were 2.5 or 3.6 times more likely to be irritable or have angry outbursts 4+ times per week, whether they had no exposure or both combat and aftermath exposure respectively.
- Males with 3+ ACEs were 5.6 and 5.8 times more likely to report anger issues if they had 3+ ACEs and aftermath exposure or both types, respectively.

