VETERAN STUDIES

Data to Drive Program, Service, & Policy Decision-Making

This information sheet is intended to serve as a quick reference explaining the survey efforts of the The Veterans Metrics Initiative: Linking Program Components to Post-Military Well-Being Study (TVMI) and the Veterans Engaging in Transition Studies (VETS).

Source of the Data

- TVMI data collection began in November 2016.
- Data was collected at 6 month intervals in 6 waves until May 2019.
- VETS is an independent extension of TVMI by Penn State researchers. This "Wave 7" of data collection was conducted between November 2020 and January 2021.

Survey Participants

- A national sample of 9,566 post-9/11 veterans who separated from the military in summer and fall 2016 initially participated in the TVMI survey process (from 48,965 eligible veterans).
- Four years after TVMI Wave 1 (2016 - 2020), 3,180 of the veterans completed the VETS survey - approximately 1/3 of the original sample.

Purpose of the Studies

- Veteran well-being was assessed in four domains: health (mental and physical); vocation (education and employment); finances; and social relationships.
- A core component analysis of the programs/services used by veterans identified program elements that were linked to positive well-being.

Illuminating Veterans' Needs & Moving Science to Practice

TVMI was coordinated by the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine, Inc. When the study concluded in 2019, researchers at the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State resolved to advance the longitudinal survey effort. The VETS Survey was developed and the VETERANetwork was established to further engage public and private partners in using data to promote effective programs and services for veterans and their families. The goal is to assess military veterans' status, functioning, and satisfaction with key aspects of their lives across the multi-year military-to-civilian transition and to use the collected data to drive positive practice and policy changes through data-driven decision-making.

Visit us online to join the effort to use science to support veterans' well-being:
veteranetwork.psu.edu

TVMI & VETS Data Collection Timeline

WAVE 1 ▶ November 2016; ~ 0-3 months post-separation; n = 9,566; paid $25

WAVE 2 ▶ May 2017; ~ 6-9 months post-separation; n = 7,200; paid $30

WAVE 3 ▶ November 2017; ~ 12-15 months post-separation; n = 7,201; paid $35

WAVE 4 ▶ May 2018; ~ 18-21 months post-separation; n = 6,480; paid $40

WAVE 5 ▶ November 2018; ~ 24-27 months post-separation; n = 5,844; paid $50

WAVE 6 ▶ May 2019; ~ 30-33 months post-separation; n = 5,258; paid $50

WAVE 7 * ▶ November 2020; ~48-51 months post-separation; n = 3,180; paid $50
* VETS

Data Collection Process

- Using the Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense Identity Repository (VADIR), ICF International, Inc., recruited TVMI participants by mail in 2016 for online and paper survey participation.
- In 2020, ICF International, Inc. contacted TVMI participants and 7,404 gave consent to be contacted for future studies; 3,516 agreed to participate in VETS in 2020.
- VETS participants were recruited by the Survey Research Center at Penn State via email and text messages. 3,180 completed online surveys, reflecting a 90.5% completion rate.

- A multi-dimensional assessment tool, the Well-being Inventory, was developed to assess well-being in four life domains (Vogt et al., 2019).
- A Core Component Analysis approach was adapted to identify and assess the effectiveness of program components within the domains in four areas: content, process, barrier reduction, and sustainability (Morgan et al., 2018).
- For VETS, new lines of questions were added to measure the impacts of COVID-19 and the scope and scale of veterans' higher education experiences and debt obligations.

Survey Participants

- TVMI participants were reflective of both enlisted service members and officers of various ranks and paygrades who had separated from active duty military service or deactivated from activated status with the reserve component within the last 90 days. Eligibility criteria for National Guard/Reservist personnel included activation of at least 180 days.
- Wave 1 TVMI participants previously served in the following United States service branches: Army (33%); Navy (19%); Air Force (19%); Marines (16%); and National Guard/Reserve (13%)
- The majority of TVMI and VETS participants were male (82%;81%) and White non-Hispanic (65%;70%). The average age of VETS participants at "Wave 7" was 37.91 years with a range of 23 to 68 years.
  See Vogt, et al., 2018 for demographics of the original sample.

> Honor to the soldier and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country's cause. Honor also to the citizen who cares for his brother *(or sister)* in the field and serves, as best he can, the same cause.
> *-President Abraham Lincoln*