**Prevalence of Sleep Disorders Soars**

**Among U.S. Veterans**

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[Sleep disorder](http://www.psychcongress.com/psych-topics/sleep-disorders) diagnoses among U.S. veterans increased 6-fold from 2000 to 2010, according to a new study in the July issue of *Sleep*. Veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health disorders, as well as those with combat experience, experienced the largest increases.

"Veterans with PTSD had a very high sleep disorder prevalence of 16%, the highest among the various health conditions or other population characteristics that we examined," said principal investigator and senior author James Burch, PhD, associate professor in the department of epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of South Carolina and a health science specialist at the WJB Dorn Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Columbia, South Carolina.

"Because of the way this study was designed, this does not prove that PTSD caused the increase in sleep disorder diagnoses. However, we recently completed a follow-up study, soon to be submitted for publication, that examined this issue in detail. In that study, a pre-existing history of PTSD was associated with an increased odds of sleep disorder onset."

Findings from the *Sleep* study stemmed from a sample of more than 9.7 million U.S. veterans who obtained care in the Veterans Health Administration system between 2000 and 2010. During the 11-year period, the age-adjusted prevalence of sleep disorders grew from less than 1% in 2000 to nearly 6% in 2010. Among sleep disorder diagnoses, the most common was sleep apnea (47%), followed by insomnia (26%).

Researchers wrote that individuals with sleep disorders that go untreated are susceptible to long-term sequelae that include psychiatric disorders.

“The results indicate a growing need for integration of sleep disorder management with patient care and health care planning among U.S. veterans,” they concluded.

– Jolynn Tumolo

**References**

[Alexander M, Ray MA, Hébert JR, et al. The National Veteran Sleep Disorder Study: descriptive epidemiology and secular trends, 2000-2010. Sleep. 2016;39:1399-1410.](http://www.journalsleep.org/ViewAbstract.aspx?pid=30685)

[Prevalence of diagnosed sleep disorders has risen among US veterans [press release]. EurekAlert!: Washington, DC; July 15, 2016.](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2016-07/aaos-pod071516.php)