

# Data Spotlight

Treatment Episode Data Set

November 8, 2012

## Half of Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions among Veterans Aged 21 to 39 Involve Alcohol as the Primary Substance of Abuse

Men and women in the U.S. military often face challenging experiences during their service, including combat exposure, multiple deployments, physical injury, and psychological trauma.<sup>1</sup> Some turn to substance use as a way to cope with these experiences.<sup>2</sup> Unhealthy substance use behaviors can persist after active duty military service and can lead to the need for substance abuse treatment among veterans.

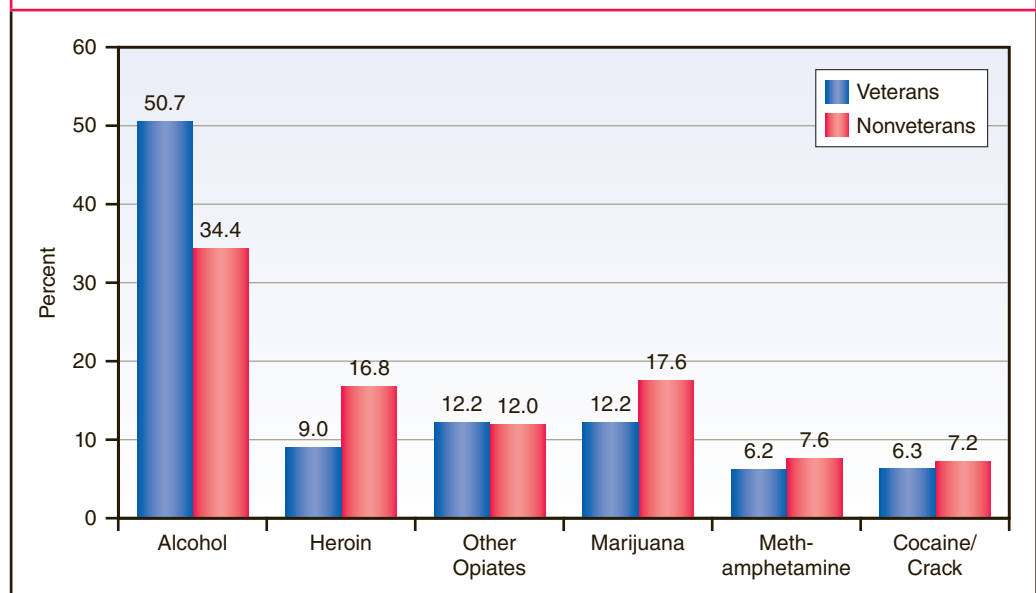
The Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) is a database of substance abuse treatment admissions, primarily at publicly funded treatment facilities. TEDS excludes admissions to Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities; therefore, the veteran admissions in TEDS represent veterans who chose to seek substance abuse treatment in a non-VA facility. According to TEDS data for 2010, there were 17,641 admissions of veterans aged 21 to 39, an age group that includes veterans with relatively recent service. Veteran admissions were more likely than nonveteran admissions to report alcohol as their primary substance of abuse (50.7 vs. 34.4 percent) and were less likely to report heroin as the primary substance of abuse (9.0 vs. 16.8 percent; Figure). The prominence of alcohol treatment admissions among veterans with relatively recent service suggests that alcohol in particular is an important target for policy and programs related to substance use and abuse among military personnel and veterans. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides resources and information for service providers working with military personnel and veterans at <http://www.samhsa.gov/militaryfamilies/>.

<sup>1</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2011). *Substance abuse among the military, veterans, and their families—April 2011* (Topics in Brief). Retrieved from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/veterans.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Committee on Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment, and Management of Substance Use Disorders in the U.S. Armed Forces. (2012). *Substance use disorders in the U.S. armed forces*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. Retrieved from [http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=13441&page=24](http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=13441&page=24)

**Primary Substance of Abuse in Treatment Admissions Aged 21 to 39, by Veteran Status: 2010**



Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), 2010, based on data received through October 10, 2011. TEDS is a compilation of data on the demographic characteristics and substance abuse problems of those admitted for substance abuse treatment in the United States, primarily at facilities that receive public funding. TEDS is one component of the Behavioral Health Services Information System (BHSIS), an integrated data system maintained by the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, SAMHSA. For more information on TEDS, see <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/DASIS.aspx#TEDS>.

