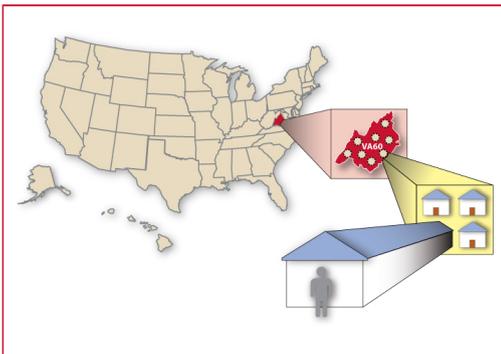


The CBHSQ Report

Spotlight

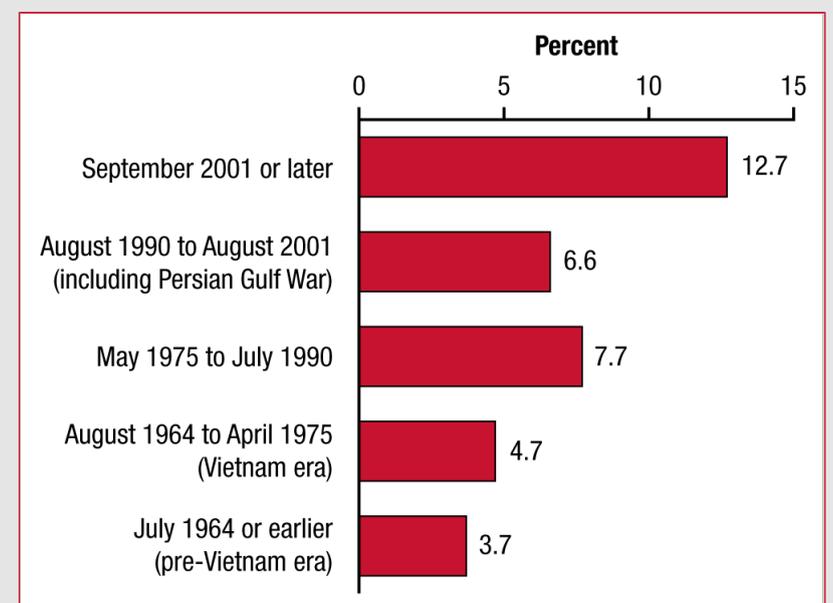
May 07, 2015



1 IN 15 VETERANS HAD A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IN THE PAST YEAR

Every year, thousands of troops leave active duty service and become military veterans within their communities. The demands of military service, including the trauma of combat, may contribute to substance use among veterans.¹ According to the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 1.5 million veterans aged 17 or older (6.6 percent of this population) had a substance use disorder in the past year.² Overall, about 1 in 15 veterans had a past year substance use disorder, whereas the national average among persons aged 17 or older was about 1 in 11, or 8.6 percent.³ The rate of substance use disorders among veterans ranged from 3.7 percent among pre-Vietnam-era veterans to 12.7 percent among those who served in the military since September 2001.⁴ To help our nation's veterans overcome substance use disorder, service providers working with veterans can access information and resources from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at <http://www.samhsa.gov/veterans-military-families>.

Substance use disorder among veterans aged 17 or older, by era of service: 2013



1. Golub, A., Vazan, P., Bennett, A. S., & Liberty, H. J. (2013). Unmet need for treatment of substance use disorders and serious psychological distress among veterans: A nationwide analysis using the NSDUH. *Military Medicine*, 178(1), 107-114.
2. Substance use disorders occur when the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causes clinically significant impairment based on criteria specified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th edition. See American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-IV)* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
3. Comparisons of the rate among veterans with the national average should be made with caution because the veteran population differs demographically from the national average in ways that could affect rates of substance use disorder.
4. Respondents could indicate multiple eras of service; thus, the eras of service categories are not mutually exclusive.

Source: National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2009 to 2011 (revised March 2012), and 2011 to 2012. The NSDUH is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their places of residence.



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. The Data Spotlight may be copied without permission. Citation of the source is appreciated. Find this report and those on similar topics online at <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/>.