Using NVDRS To Improve Understanding of Suicide among Veterans

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Outline

• Overview of Rate and Characteristics of Suicide among Veterans
• Gaps in Knowledge
• Existing Research
• Characteristics of Veteran Suicide - NVDRS
• Future Directions
Rate and Characteristics of Suicide among Veterans

• The Department of Veterans Affairs recently released a report on suicide among Veterans.

• Key findings in this report included:
  – ~20% of all suicides are identified as Veterans on the death certificate.
  – Geographic variability in Veteran suicide prevalence.
  – An estimated 22 Veterans die from suicide each day.
Percentage of all Suicides Identified as Veterans

Percentage of Suicides Identified as Veteran on Death Certificate

Variability in Veteran Prevalence among all Suicides
Estimated Number of Veterans Who Die From Suicide Each Day
Gaps in Knowledge

• Information on the characteristics of suicide among Veterans who use VHA services has expanded knowledge on clinical characteristics associated with risk and trends among different age groups and involving different mechanisms.

• Despite the strengths of data obtained from those who use VHA clinical services, comparatively little is known about:
  – The characteristics of risk for suicide among Veterans who do not use VHA services.
  – Contextual factors, individual histories and precipitating events that may be unique to Veteran populations.
Characteristics of Suicide among U.S. Army Active Duty Personnel in 17 States from 2005 to 2007 – Mechanism and Context

Percentage of All Suicides

Characteristics of Suicide among U.S. Army Active Duty Personnel in 17 States from 2005 to 2007 – Risk Factors and Precipitants

Percentage of All Suicides

Suicide among Veterans in 16 States, 2005 to 2008: Comparisons Between Utilizers and Non-Utilizers of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Services - Males

Suicide among Veterans in 16 States, 2005 to 2008: Comparisons Between Utilizers and Non-Utilizers of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Services – Males Aged 18 to 29 Years

Suicide among Veterans in 16 States, 2005 to 2008: Comparisons Between Utilizers and Non-Utilizers of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Services – Females

Associations Between Veteran Status and Mechanism of Suicide, 2003-2005

Associations Between Veteran Status and Type of Poisoning, 2003-2005

Odds Ratios for the Associations Between Type of Poisoning and Veteran Status

Missing Information on Veteran Status by Year

Percent Missing Information on Veteran Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Suicide</th>
<th>Other Violent Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ICRC-S
Percentage of All Suicides Identified as Veteran, 2005 to 2010

Percent Veteran

- 2005: 23.0%
- 2006: 21.0%
- 2007: 21.0%
- 2008: 20.0%
- 2009: 20.0%
- 2010: 18.0%
Suicides by Firearm among Veterans, 2005 - 2010
Percentage of Suicides Who Were Homeless at Time of Death, by Veteran Status
Location of Suicide by Veteran Status

- Residence
  - Veteran: 80%
  - Non-Veteran: 20%
- Roadway
  - Veteran: 0%
  - Non-Veteran: 0%
- Institution
  - Veteran: 10%
  - Non-Veteran: 90%
Percentage of Suicides With Recent Financial Crisis by Veteran Status

![Bar chart showing the percentage of suicides by veteran status from 2005 to 2010. The chart compares veterans and non-veterans across these years. The y-axis represents the percentage, ranging from 0 to 16.]
Percentage of Suicides With Recent Financial Crisis Among Middle-Age Adults by Veteran Status

![Bar chart showing percentage of suicides with recent financial crisis among middle-age adults by veteran status from 2005 to 2010. The chart includes data for both veterans and non-veterans.](chart_image)

- **Veteran**
- **Non-Veteran**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Veteran</th>
<th>Non-Veteran</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Characteristics of Suicide among Middle-Age Adults from 2005 to 2010 by Veteran Status

Summary

• NVDRS is a valuable resource for expanding knowledge of characteristics of suicide among Veterans.

• Existing studies have begun to document important differences in suicide decedents with and without history of military service.

• Analyses of data from NVDRS also identified many similarities in characteristics of suicide among those with and without history of military service.

• Results from analyses of data obtained from NVDRS are largely consistent with information from other sources.
Way Forward

• Continued expansion of NVDRS.
• Identify opportunities to merge data obtained from NVDRS with information gathered by other systems.
• Consideration of both clinical and contextual characteristics associated with suicide.
• Support the development of parallel processes as a foundation for continued expansion of NVDRS and mechanism for informing current efforts.
Questions?