

## Post-traumatic stress disorder primary suicide risk factor for veterans

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August 25, 2009—Researchers working with Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans have found that post-traumatic stress disorder, the current most common mental disorder among veterans returning from service in the Middle East, is associated with an increased risk for thoughts of suicide.

Results of the study indicated that veterans who screened positive for PTSD were four times more likely to report suicide-related thoughts relative to veterans without the disorder. The research, published in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, establishes PTSD as a risk factor for thoughts of suicide in Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans. This holds true, even after accounting for other psychiatric disorder diagnoses, such as substance abuse and depression. Veterans who screened positive for PTSD and two or more comorbid mental disorders were significantly more likely to experience thoughts of suicide relative to veterans with PTSD alone.

As many as forty-six percent of veterans in the study experienced suicidal thoughts or behaviors in the month prior to seeking care, and of those veterans, three percent reported an actual attempt within four months prior to seeking the care. Suicide-related thoughts and behaviors discovered in a returning veteran who has been diagnosed with PTSD, especially in the presence of other mental disorders, may suggest an increased risk for suicide.

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

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