

Vets with MS have higher prevalence of chronic diseases

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(HealthDay) -- Male veterans with multiple sclerosis (MS) have an increased prevalence of chronic diseases compared with the general population and with veterans without MS, according to a study published online Feb. 9 in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Preventing Chronic Disease*.

Sherri L. LaVela, Ph.D., M.P.H., of the Hines VA Hospital in Illinois, and associates conducted a cross-sectional survey of 1,142 male veterans with MS in 2003 and 2004 to assess the prevalence of chronic disease. Results were compared with 2003 [Behavioral Risk Factor](#) Surveillance

System secondary data for 31,500 veterans and 68,357 individuals from the general population -- both groups without MS.

The researchers found that 49 percent of veterans with MS had hypercholesterolemia, 47 percent had hypertension, 16 percent had diabetes, 11 percent had [coronary heart disease](#), and 7 percent had had a stroke. These chronic diseases were significantly more prevalent among veterans with MS than the general population, overall and in a subset analysis of the group aged 50 years or older. Compared with veterans without MS, the prevalence of hypercholesterolemia, hypertension, diabetes, and stroke, was increased for veterans with MS; however, with the exception of stroke, the differences were not significant in the subgroup aged 50 years or older.

"These findings raise awareness of chronic disease in a veteran cohort and help bridge a gap in the literature on chronic disease epidemiology in men with MS," the authors write. "We identified chronic disease priorities that may benefit from focused interventions to reduce disparities."

More information: [Full Text](#)

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