

Many Iraq-Afghanistan war vets struggle to find enough food: study

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Photo courtesy: U.S. Army

25 percent face food insecurity, which triggers other woes, Minnesota researchers find.

(HealthDay)—One-quarter of U.S. veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars have trouble getting enough access to enough food, according to new research.

The researchers, from the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis Department of Veterans Affairs, surveyed 922 veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan since October 2001 and had made at least one outpatient visit to the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

"We found that 27 percent of veterans who served in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan don't have consistent access to sufficient food," study leader Rachel Widome from the University of Minnesota, said in a university news release.

"That's drastically higher than the prevalence of [food insecurity](#) in the U.S., which is 14.5 percent," she noted.

The study found that the veterans most likely to have trouble getting enough to eat are: young; have a low income; live with children; are not married/partnered; are not employed/on active duty; have poor general health; and had a lower final military pay grade.

In addition, food-insecure veterans are also more likely to binge drink frequently, use tobacco and get less sleep than those who have enough food, according to the study published May 7 in the journal *Public Health Nutrition*.

"It is unacceptable that so many men and women who fought for our country struggle to afford food now that they are back home," Widome said. "We hope this research prompts discussion on how to help [veterans](#) currently struggling to access food."

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more about [veterans and military health](#).

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