

Study uncovers high prevalence of military sexual trauma among transgender veterans

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New research found a high prevalence of military sexual trauma (MST) among transgender veterans and an association between the experience of MST and certain mental health conditions.

After examining archival data regarding [transgender](#) veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan Conflicts, investigators identified 332 transgender veterans treated at the Veterans Health Administration between 2000 and 2013. Nearly one in five [transgender men](#) and one in seven transgender women screened positive for MST.

The prevalence of MST among transgender female veterans was much higher than the reported one percent prevalence among cisgender male veterans, whose biological sex matches their gender's identity.

MST in transgender veterans was associated with a higher likelihood of posttraumatic stress and personality disorders for men. It was associated with an increased likelihood of depressive, bipolar, posttraumatic stress, and [personality disorders](#) for women.

"The most surprising finding of our study was that many more transgender women veterans experience MST than their cisgender male counterparts," said Dr. Jan Lindsay, lead author of the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* study. "In addition, having experienced MST was significantly associated with the likelihood of a mental health condition for both men and [women](#). We still have much to learn about how transgender individuals are affected by MST, so that we can, hopefully,

tailor culturally competent treatments to improve their care."

More information: Jan A. Lindsay et al, Mental Health of Transgender Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan Conflicts Who Experienced Military Sexual Trauma, *Journal of Traumatic Stress* (2016). [DOI: 10.1002/jts.22146](https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22146)

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