

Women's Health Issues launches Special Collection on Women Veterans' Health

6 November 2014

In honor of Veterans Day, the peer-reviewed journal *Women's Health Issues* (WHI) today released a new Special Collection on women veterans' health, with a focus on mental health.

The special collection also highlights recent studies addressing healthcare services, reproductive health and cardiovascular health of women veterans.

"In recent years, we have seen the Veterans Administration working to improve care and [health outcomes](#) of [women veterans](#) and service members," said Chloe Bird, editor-in-chief of *Women's Health Issues*. "The studies published in *Women's Health Issues* can help inform efforts to provide the highest quality of care to the growing population of women veterans."

Women's Health Issues is the official journal of the Jacobs Institute of Women's Health, which is based at Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University. This Special Collection includes articles published after the WHI 2011 special supplement "Health and Health Care of Women Veterans and Women in the Military," which is available free of charge online.

Among the featured articles on women veterans' mental health, is a systematic review of recent literature on this subject by Jennifer J. Runnals, PhD, and colleagues from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Duke University Medical Center, which appeared in WHI's September-October 2014 issue. The authors note that since 2000, the VA has witnessed a 33% increase in the proportion of women accessing outpatient mental health services, and new female VA users are often younger and show an increased use of VA healthcare services.

"The VA's commitment to ensuring equitable access to high-quality health care for women veterans of all ages has fueled a burgeoning field of research," Runnals and her colleagues explain

in their review of 32 recent studies on women veterans' mental health. Their findings include the following:

- Compared to male veterans, female veterans had similar rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), higher rates of anxiety disorders and depression, and significant mental health and medical comorbidities.
- For both genders, multiple deployments and post-deployment relationship disruption were associated with increased risk for PTSD.
- Barriers to women's utilization of the VA healthcare system included economic, organizational, and patient factors such as poor health.

The authors of the systematic review identify several content areas where additional research would be useful. These areas include best practices for the provision of gender-sensitive care; strategies to address treatment access and retention; and the impact of family reintegration and relationship disruption on women veterans' [mental health](#).

More information: The Women's Health Issues Special Collection on Women Veterans' Health is available here, and all articles can be accessed for free until the end of November 2014. The 2011 Women's Health Issues supplement "Health and Health Care of Women Veterans and Women in the Military" is available at [www.whijournal.com/issue/S1049-3867\(11\)X0006-3](http://www.whijournal.com/issue/S1049-3867(11)X0006-3), and all articles are open-access.

Provided by George Washington University

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