The number of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans seeking treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder from the Department of Veterans Affairs jumped by nearly 20,000 — almost 70% — in the 12 months ending June 30, 2007, VA records show.

More than 100,000 combat veterans sought help for mental illness since the start of the war in Afghanistan in 2001, about one in seven of those who have left active duty since then, according to VA records collected through June. Almost half of those were PTSD cases.

The total of mental health cases among war veterans grew by 58% from 63,767 on June 30, 2006, to 100,580 on June 30, 2007, VA records show. The mental health issues include PTSD, drug and alcohol dependency, and depression. They involve troops who left the military and sought health care from the veterans department.

A study released on 3/12/07 stated that of 103,788 Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans seen at VA health care facilities, 25,658 (25%) received mental health diagnoses; 56% of whom had 2 or more distinct mental health diagnoses.

Overall, 32,010 (31%) of veterans in the 3/12/07 study received mental health and/or psychosocial diagnoses. The youngest group of OEF/OIF veterans (age, 18-24 years) were at greatest risk for receiving mental health or posttraumatic stress disorder diagnoses compared with veterans 40 years or older.

In 2003, an estimated 56.6 percent of veterans used alcohol in the past month compared with 50.8 percent of comparable nonveterans. An estimated 13.2 percent of veterans reported driving while under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs in the past year compared with 12.2 percent of comparable nonveterans.

In 2002/2003, an estimated 1.2 million male veterans were identified as suffering from serious mental illnesses. Approximately 340,000 of these individuals had co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Approximately 209,000 female veterans (13.1 percent) reported serious mental illness, and 25,000 (1.6 percent) reported co-occurring substance use disorder and SMI.


