

Caring for the Older Adult Veteran Population: Critical Considerations

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BACKGROUND

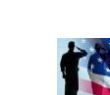

- By 2035, older adult population (≥ 65 y/o) will be higher than population of children < 18 y/o
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates a total of 11 million Veterans \geq age 60 in 2019
- Must prepare to meet the burden of delivering health care to older adults

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Multi-focal, complex care:

- Pre-existing co-morbid conditions
- Service-related physical conditions
- Mental & behavioral health conditions:
 - Pre-existing & service-related

Veteran-centric Culture & Subcultures:

-  Standards of behavior & discipline
-  Order & Procedure
-  Military values, customs, & traditions
-  Branch of service
-  Era of service
-  Warrior Ethos
-  Deployment & reintegration

BRIDGING THE GAP



Preparing future NPs to care for Veterans in VA and civilian settings:

- ✓ Integration of Veteran-centric content into NP curricula
- ✓ Innovative approach to compliance with:
 - **IOM Future of Nursing Report Recommendations (2010):**
 - Lead & manage collaborative efforts (Interprofessional collaboration)
 - Nurse Residency Programs
 - Prepare & enable nurses to lead change & advance health
 - **NONPF Competencies related to population health**
 - **QSEN Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice & Quality and Safety**

VETERAN-CENTRIC HEALTH CARE CONCERNS

Mental Health/Behavioral Adjustment Disorders:

- PTSD
- Depression
- TBI
- Suicide risk
- Substance Use Disorders



Chronic Issues:

- Hypertension
- Lung disease
- Chronic pain
- Tinnitus/Hearing loss
- Amputations
- Homelessness
- Hazardous exposures
- Rehabilitation care

GUIDANCE FOR PRACTICE

- Obtain military health history:
(*Always ask for permission to ask questions*)
 - Military experience, service connected health issues, sexual assault, environmental exposures, blood-borne virus exposure, living situation, stress, mental health, support system, substance use/abuse, transportation
- Identify & learn the culture and language specific to Veterans – vital for effective communication & establishing a trusting relationship
- Become familiar with mission & core values of each branch of the military
- Assess effects of military culture on health care engagement & behaviors (*Warrior Ethos*)
- Be aware of personal biases & attitude
- Assess for moral injury related to service
- Individualize care - inclusive of Veteran-centric culture and service-related conditions
- Coordinate care with VA and/or other community providers
- Know and have resources available for Veterans

REFERENCES

Available upon request