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<http://washington.cbslocal.com/2013/02/01/study-22-military-veterans-commit-suicide-every-day/>

Study: 22 Military Veterans Commit Suicide Every Day

February 1, 2013

The results of a new study indicate that suicide rates among veterans in the United States are increasing.

An estimated 22 military veterans take their lives every day in America, according to the study helmed by Robert Bossarte, an epidemiologist and researcher who works with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“While the percentage of all suicides reported as Veterans has decreased, the number of suicides has increased,” the conclusion of the study stated.

Specific trends were observed during the course of the study regarding the age and gender of veterans who most frequently committed suicide.

“A majority of Veteran suicides are among those age 50 years and older. Male Veterans who die by suicide are older than non-Veteran males who die by suicide,” the study’s findings stated. “The age distribution of Veteran and non-Veteran women who have died from suicide is similar.”

The study was conducted over the course of two years, and is, according to Bossarte, indicative mainly of veteran suicides playing a part in what is a national problem.

“There is a perception that we have a veterans’ suicide epidemic on our hands. I don’t think that is true,” he was quoted as saying by the paper. “The rate is going up in the country, and veterans are a part of it.”

Still, the Washington Post is reporting that the rate of veteran suicides discovered by Bossarte is approximately 20 percent higher than 2007 figures offered by the VA.

Representatives of the VA said the study is a part of their continued efforts to prevent veteran suicides.

“The mental health and well-being of our courageous men and women who have served the nation is the highest priority for VA, and even one suicide is one too many,” he said in a statement to the Post.

Bossarte and others are hopeful that the findings of the study will assist in creating better prevention programming.

“Although this was not a research-based analysis and there are significant limitations in the data that are available ... this first attempt at a comprehensive review of Veteran suicide does provide us with valuable information for future directions in care and program development,” the study stated.

Others, however, feel the effort put forth by the VA is too insignificant in comparison to the larger issue at hand.

“If the VA wants to get its arms around this problem, why does it have such a small number of people working on it?” retired Col. and former Army psychiatrist Elspeth Cameron Ritchie rhetorically asked the Post. “This is a start, but it is a faint start. It is not enough.”