Military Sexual Trauma and Suicide Mortality

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An analysis of Veterans Health Administration data found that both women and men who experienced military sexual trauma (that is, sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment) during military service had an increased risk for suicide even after the analysis was adjusted for age and risk factors, including medical and mental health conditions and rural residence.

Approximately 1 percent of male veterans and 21 percent of female veterans reported military sexual trauma. Suicide rates were significantly higher among men and women who screened positive for military sexual trauma. Veterans who reported military sexual trauma and subsequently died by suicide "were significantly more likely to be treated for mental health conditions" that were related to their experience of sexual trauma, as determined by their mental health care provider.