

## **Higher Susceptibility of Aging-Related Disease for Military, Veterans' Populations**

**Context:** Nearly 75% of all U.S. deaths are linked to 9 aging-related diseases, and of these, at least half are contracted at much higher rates by active U.S. military personnel and veterans than the general public. [i]

The impact experienced by the Veteran's Administration is immense. Serving a population largely over the age of 65, the V.A.'s cost-per-patient are over 75% higher than the private sector, and are even higher than Medicare. The positive economic benefit of developing more effective preventative treatments for aging-related disease will most immediately impact the military and the V.A. [ii]

### **Heart Disease and High-Blood Pressure**

- Veterans are at higher risk of developing heart disease, compared with non-veterans. [iii]
- 30% of veterans have hypertension. [iv]
- Veterans and soldiers who have seen combat are 33% more likely to develop high-blood pressure; those who have witnessed a death are 50% more likely. [iv]

### **Alzheimer's Disease**

- Traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are signature injuries of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and have been linked to an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease (AD) and other dementias. [v]

### **Cancers**

- Service members tend to have higher rates of melanoma, brain, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, breast, prostate and testicular cancers than civilians. [vi]
- The rate of lung cancer and associated deaths in veterans is nearly twice that of civilians. [vii]

### **Diabetes**

- 25% of all patients of the Veteran's Administration have diabetes, and increased risk of diabetes is associated with veterans. [viii]

## References

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