

U.S. Veterans and Suicide

**all rates are per 100,000 populations*

- The suicide rate of Veterans was 35.6* in 2014, a 31.1% increase since 2001.¹
- In 2015, 97 civilians and 20.6 Veterans died from suicide per day.²
 - 6.1 out of these 20.6 Veterans are active users of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).²
- Veterans represent 8.3% of U.S.’s adult population, but account for 14.3% of deaths by suicide of the total U.S. adult population (2015).²
 - The amount of suicides per day of Veterans has remained stable while suicides per day of civilians has increased.²
- In 2015, the rate of suicide in Veterans was 2.1 times higher than U.S. civilian adults (age and sex-adjusted).¹
 - Male Veterans have a 1.3 times higher rate of suicide than U.S. civilian male adults.²
 - Female Veterans have a 2.0 times higher rate of suicide than U.S. civilian female adults.²

By Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Veterans...

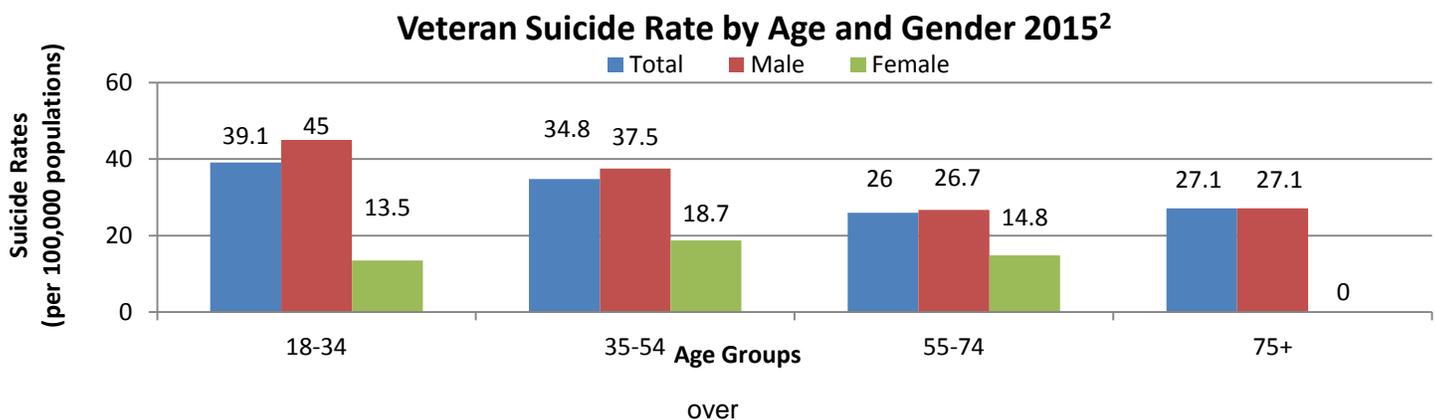
- 39.4% of U.S. Veterans are enrolled in Veterans Health Administration (VHA).³
- The number of VHA Veterans with a 50% or greater service-connected disability has increased from 11.7% to 25.9% from 2001-2014.³
 - The number of veterans not under the VHA with a 50% or greater service-connected disability has decreased from 8.8% to 4.4% from 2001-2014.³

By age...

- The rate of suicide among Veterans is highest during the age range of 18-34 and lowest during the age range of 55 or older.²
 - However, 58.1% of all Veteran suicide occurred among the ages 55 or older (2015)**.²
 - Suicide rates of the age groups 18-34 has remained stable among civilians and increased among Veterans (2005-2015).²

By gender...

- In 2014 the male Veteran suicide rate was 37.2*, a 29.7% increase since 2001, compared to the male civilian rate of 25*.¹
 - The suicide rate of male Veterans in the age group of 18-54 is higher and increases at a greater rate than male civilians in the age group of 18-54.²
 - For the ages 75+, male Veterans have a lower suicide rate than male civilians.²
- In 2014 the female Veteran suicide rate was 19*, a 62.4% increase since 2001, compared to the female civilian rate of 7.2*.¹
 - Except for the age group 55+, the suicide rates among female Veterans is higher than female civilians.²
 - In 2015, the highest rate of suicide for both female Veterans and non-Veterans occurred during the age range of 35-54.²



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By race/ethnicity...

- The Veteran population is made up of 77.3% Whites, 12% Blacks, 7.1% Hispanic, and 3.6% other.²
- In 2015, Veteran VHA patients that completed suicide were 83.7% White, 6.0% Black, 3.7% Hispanic, 4.6% other, and 2.0% unknown.²

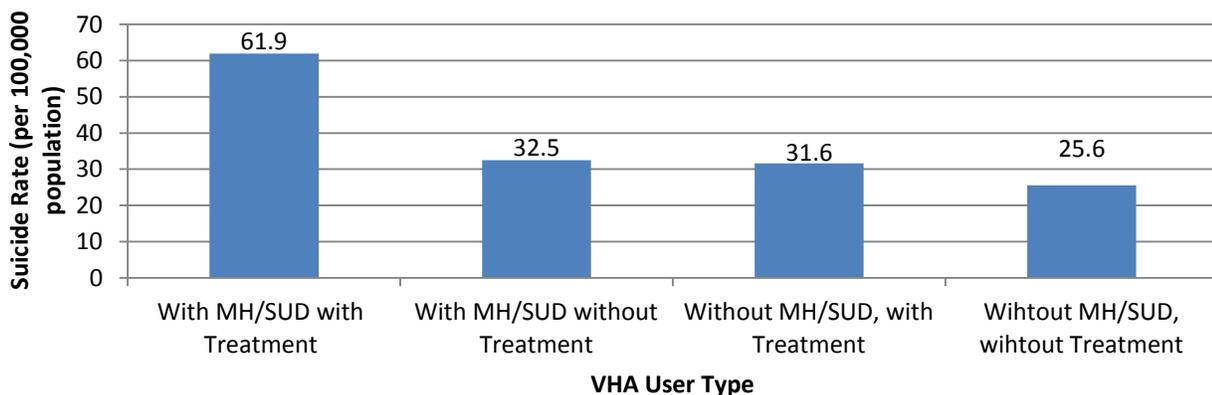
By suicidal behavior...

- In 2015, the methods of suicide used by female Veterans included:
 - 39.9% by firearm, 35.6% by poison, 17.6% by suffocation.²
 - Suicides by means of firearms and suffocation have increased among female Veterans who use VHA services.²
- In 2015, the methods of suicide used by male Veterans included:
 - 68.3% by firearm, 15.8% by suffocation, and 10.2% by poison.²

By VHA Veterans health characteristics...

- In 2015, the number of suicides among VHA users with a mental health condition and/or substance use disorder (MH/SUD) has remained constant.²
 - Veterans with bipolar disorder have the highest rate of suicide among VHA users with a mental health condition and/or substance use disorder.³
- VHA users with MH/SUDs who receive treatment have higher suicide rates than all other VHA patient.²
- Non-fatal suicide attempts have increased from 600 per month in 2012 to 900 per month in 2014.³
- Death by suicide within a year of a suicide attempt has remained stable from 2001-2014.³
- The suicide rates among VHA users have remained stable from 2001-2014.³

Rate of Suicide of VHA Users 2015²



*due to population size of veterans aged 55+ being larger than veterans younger than 55.

¹U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Facts About Veteran Suicide: August 2017. Available at: <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/VA-Suicide-Prevention-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
²U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. VA National Suicide Data Report 2005–2015 [online]. Available at: https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/OMHSP_National_Suicide_Data_Report_2005-2015_06-14-18_508-compliant.pdf
³U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Suicide Among Veterans and Other Americans 2001-2014. Available at: <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/2016suicidedatareport.pdf>