

Transgender veterans diagnosed with significantly more mental and medical health disorders

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The first large, controlled study of health disparities between clinically diagnosed transgender and non-transgender patients—based on the medical records of more than 5,000 patients treated in the Veterans Health Administration—showed that transgender veterans had a significantly greater prevalence of numerous psychiatric and medical conditions. The specific disorders examined and the implications of the study findings are discussed in detail in an article published in *LGBT Health*.

In "[Mental Health and Medical Health Disparities in 5135 Transgender Veterans Receiving Healthcare in the Veterans Health Administration: A Case-Control Study](#)", George Brown, MD, Mountain Home Veterans Affairs Medical Center and East Tennessee State University (Johnson City, TN), and Kenneth Jones, PhD, Veterans Health Administration (Washington, DC), describe the identification of these [health disparities](#) as a first step toward transgender health equity. Follow-up studies are needed to understand the factors that underlie the disparities and to develop and evaluate strategies to intervene and reduce or eliminate them.

In the current study, transgender veterans were significantly more likely to suffer from all ten of the [mental health conditions](#) examined, including depression, suicide thoughts or intentions, serious mental illness, and post-traumatic stress disorder. They also had a much higher prevalence of 16 of 17 medical diagnoses studied, with HIV infection accounting for the largest disparity.

"Employing more robust methods, this study confirms previous reports of transgender [health](#) disparities but finds that these disparities are more global than previously appreciated," says *LGBT Health* Editor-in-Chief William Byne, MD, PhD, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY. "The global disparities compared to matched non-transgender veterans have important policy and practice implications that extend beyond the Veterans Health Administration."

More information: The article is available free to download on the [LGBT Health](#) website until February 6, 2016.

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