

US Military family mental health problems on the rise



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Repeated deployments of American soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan have taken their toll not only on the troops themselves but also their families, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Information disclosed by the Pentagon to the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee revealed that visits by family members of active-duty military personnel to therapists have increased at a compound annual growth rate of 15% over the past 10 years.

Jonathan Woodson, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, said the increase was due in large part to "the stresses of repeated deployments."

The one good thing to take away from the mental health news, says Alan Peterson, a retired Air Force psychologist now at the University of Texas Health Science Center, is that the numbers show military families are beginning to get over the stigma of seeing a therapist.

An investigation by Nextgov has shown that so many troops are returning from combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq (20-30%) that the Army is unable to keep track of the records of all those who are suffering. AllGov

FACTS & FIGURES

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics the unemployment rate among post 9/11 veterans was 15.2 percent in January and well above the 9.6 percent rate for non-veterans.

The Veterans Administration said in December 2010 that more than 9,000 U.S. veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan were homeless. UPI

Nearly 76,000 American veterans were homeless on a given night in 2009, the latest year for which reliable statistics are available. projo.com

300,000 of the U.S. military veterans coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD. Abclocal.go.com

An average of 18 veterans commit suicide every day and five of those are already getting treatment at the VA. Abclocal.go.com

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