



## Vets substance abuse, mental illness link

Published: April 20, 2011 at 11:17 PM

NEW HAVEN, Conn., April 20 (UPI) -- As many as one-third of U.S. military veterans who suffer from mental health disorders also have substance use disorders, researchers say.

Study leader Dr. Ismene Petrakis of Yale University School of Medicine in New Haven, Conn., used data from the Department of Veterans Affairs to examine rates of substance use disorders among veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. They checked those who were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychiatric disorders.

A total of 1,001,996 VA patients were diagnosed with one of the six designated mental disorders.

The study, published in *The American Journal on Addictions*, found the rates of substance use disorders among those with mental illness ranged from 21 percent to 35 percent. There were high rates of substance use disorders among veterans with mental illness -- the highest rates of substance abuse occurred among those with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

"Our findings may be useful in program planning and for understanding the needs of veterans of different eras," Petrakis said in a statement.

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