



In response to the increasing number of women veterans, and their unique healthcare needs, VA has focused additional attention on women's health research. VA Research and Development efforts are focused on better understanding the general healthcare needs and healthcare utilization of women veterans; examining the unique experiences of women veterans regarding risks, treatment, and healthcare outcomes related to sexual and other military traumas; and assessing VA's organization of care for women veterans and the implications for improved quality of care.

Examples of VA research advances

- **Study examines women's perceptions of VA**—Many women veterans who are not enrolled in the VA health system are unaware that VA provides women's healthcare, according to a recent study by VA researchers in Los Angeles. The study also found that overall quality of care, access to gender-appropriate services, and a gender-sensitive environment that respects and allows for privacy were among the healthcare issues that matter most to women veterans.
- **Violence against servicewomen**—A VA research team is interviewing about 500 active-duty women and female veterans from five Midwestern states, all currently or formerly with the reserves or National Guard, with the goal of identifying risk factors for sexual assault and physical violence against women in the military. The study will also look at health outcomes for the study participants and any barriers to VA care.
- **Health issues that are a unique concern to women**—Many VA studies focus on health issues that are of special or unique concern to women veterans. Examples include post-traumatic stress disorder in women, depression in women, breast cancer, lupus, and osteoporosis.

Facts About Womens' Health

As of Sept. 2006, there were about 1.7 million women veterans in the United States and Puerto Rico, accounting for some seven percent of the U.S. veteran population. Women currently make up 15 percent of the active-duty force and 23 percent of the reserve force; it is projected that by 2010 woman will account for 10 percent of the veteran population. In addition to offering comprehensive women's healthcare, VA supports medical and psychosocial research aimed at improving the lives of women veterans.

