



veteransinstitute

Suicide among Dutch veterans

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Veterans. Our mission.

Outline

Dutch veterans

Psycho-social problems after deployment

The study into suicide

Reflections on results

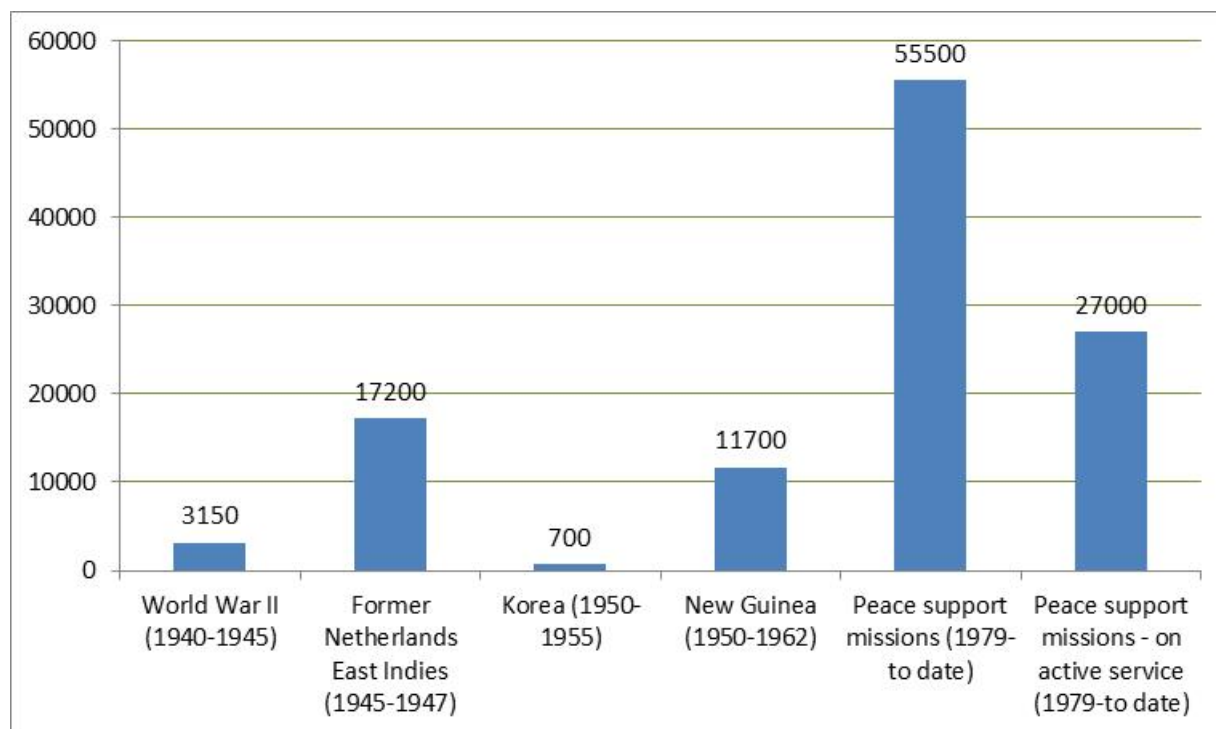
Concluding remarks

Dutch veterans

War or peace operation





+ 100 missions

+ 670,000 veterans since 1940



Psychosocial problems (1)

In general, veterans do fine

-  No need for care
-  Needs not related to deployment
-  Deployment related needs; professional care
-  Deployment related needs; no professional care

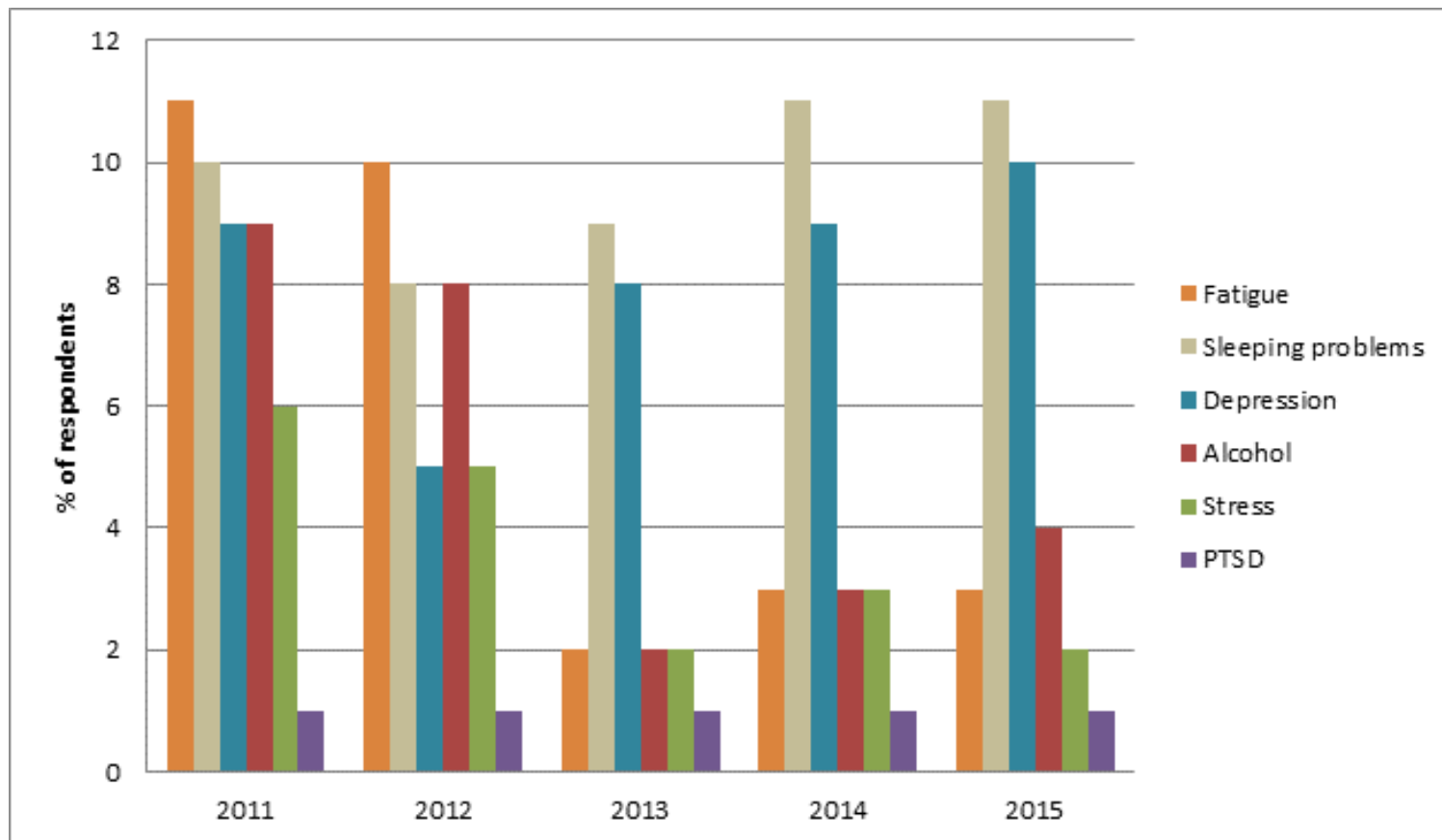
Need for care per 100 veterans



N = 2,814; various missions since 1950; Van Wijngaarden & Meije (2015)

Psychosocial problems (2)

Post-deployment health assessment (six months after deployment)



N = 11,649

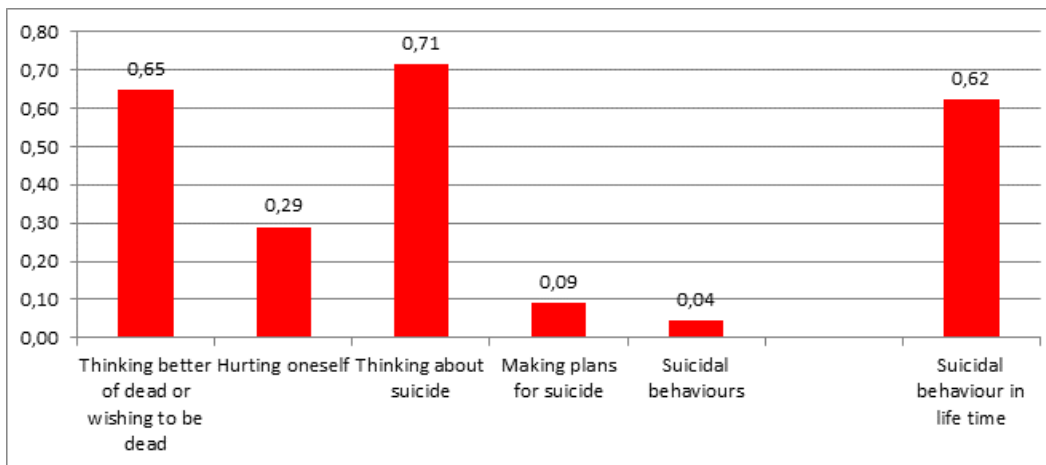
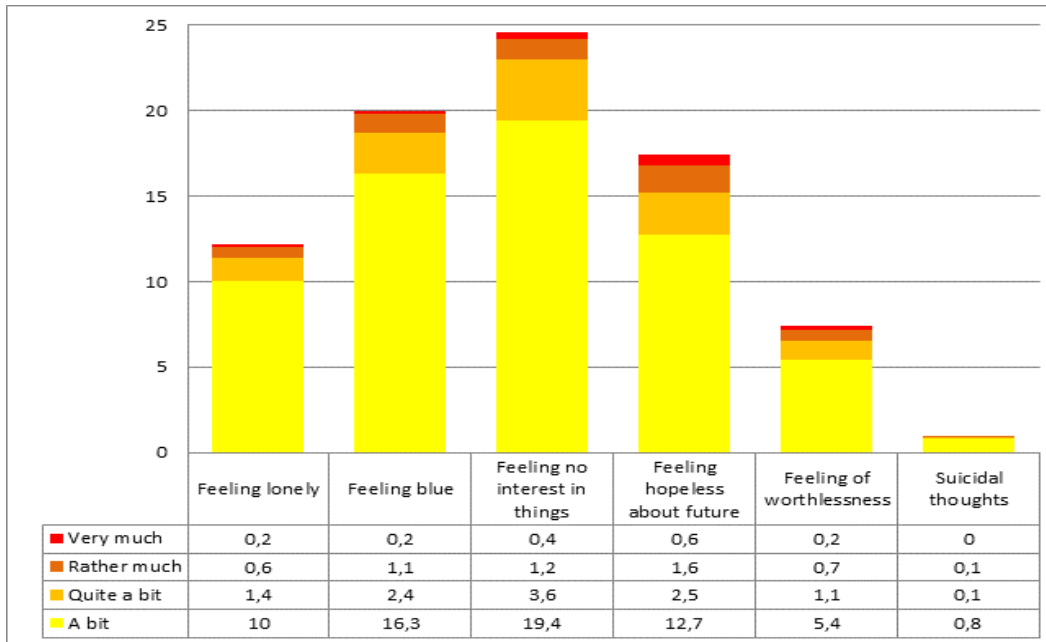


Psychosocial problems (3)

Depression

N = 4,492

2013 – 2015



Suicidal thoughts, plans, behaviours

N = 4,486

2013 – 2015



The study (1)

National Institute for Public Health and the Environment

Data from Ministry of Defence and Statistics Netherlands

Time frame 2004 – 2012

Deployed – not deployed – male working population

The study (2)

	Working men	Deployed	Not deployed
Participants	165,154	40,444	33,364
Mean age at entry	27	28	20
Emigrated	9.5%	8.3%	8.0%
Social security benefit at exit	7.0%	2.3%	3.7%
Soldier	NA	11.6%	46.4%
Corporal	NA	20.8%	15.6%
NCO/officer	NA	67.6%	38.0%
Still serving at exit	NA	66.4%	44.6%

NA = not applicable



The study (3)

	Working men	Deployed	Not deployed
Participants	165,154	40,444	33,364
Died (incl. suicide)	1,388 (0.84%)	252 (0.62%)	199 (0.60%)
Suicide	156 (0.09%)	22 (0.05%)	27 (0.08%)
Follow-up time in person-years			
Median	9.0	8.7	4.1
25 – 75 percentile	6.5 – 9.0	4.8 – 9.0	2.2 – 7.7
Sum	1,364,667	276,510	240,351
Incidence rate of suicide per 100,000 person-years	11.4	8.0	11.2

The study (4)

Cox-regression analyses

Veterans versus control groups

Adjusted for age, rank (not for male civilians), and receiving social security benefit at study exit

All veterans

Veterans with one or more deployments

Veterans with total deployment length 30 – 190 days or longer

No significant differences in Relative Risk for mortality or suicide

Reflections on results (1)

The Netherlands

- Prevalence suicidal thoughts – plans – behaviours: 8.3% - 3.0% - 2.2%
- 14,000 persons receiving first aid for hurting oneself (2014)
- 1,871 suicides in 2015; rate = 11.0/100,000
- Rising since 2007
- Nation-wide action plan

Reflections on results (2)

The military

- Deployment length
- Care accross the deployment cycle
- Veterans Office: 24/7 access to care
- National Veterans Health Care System
- Financial arrangements
- Peer support, reunions, cafés, meeting centers, veterans days, veterans associations, ...

Reflections on results (3)

The study

- First study on suicide among veterans
- Population: relatively young; recently returned; large part still serving
- No insight in different missions; female veterans; older missions
- Suicide versus “undetermined intent”

Concluding remarks

No action

Veterans Law (2012/2014)

- appreciation
- social recognition
- care

Replication/extension?





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