

FACTSHEET

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Veterans and Alzheimer's Disease

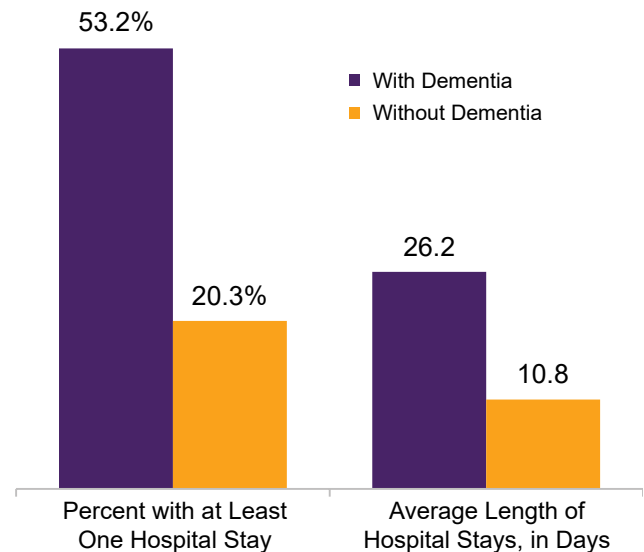
Nearly half a million American veterans have Alzheimer's — and as the population ages, that number is expected to grow.

- In 2015, an estimated 486,000 veterans were living with Alzheimer's.
- The annual number of veterans newly diagnosed with dementia has increased more than 22% since 2008.

For veterans, prevalence may grow even faster in future years because they have a higher risk of developing dementia.

- Evidence indicates that moderate and severe traumatic brain injury (TBI) increases the risk of developing certain forms of dementia. One study of female veterans found a 49% greater risk of dementia among those with TBI.
- More than 1 in 5 combat wounds from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq involve brain injuries. More than 430,000 veterans have been diagnosed with TBI since 2000 — 12.7% of them with moderate or severe TBI.
- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has also been linked to an increased risk of dementia, possibly a doubling of the risk.
- PTSD is two to five times more common in veterans compared with the general population. From 2000-2015, more than 167,000 service members were diagnosed with PTSD.

Hospitalizations Among Veterans With and Without Dementia



The large increase in the number of veterans with Alzheimer's and other dementias will place a heavy burden on the VA health care system.

- Veterans with dementia are 2.6 times more likely to be hospitalized than other veterans — and hospital stays are, on average, 2.4 times longer.
- The average number of outpatient psychiatric visits is three times greater among veterans with dementia than veterans without.
- More than 60% of the VA's costs of caring for those with Alzheimer's are for nursing home care.