

More Information: References and Stats

Prevalence: PTSD in the general population

Traumatic Experience	70% of adults in the U.S. have experienced some type of traumatic event at least once in their lives. 2
PTSD Diagnosis	Of these, 20% go on to develop PTSD. 2
Overall Prevalence	An estimated 8% of Americans – 24.4 million people – have PTSD at any given time. 2, 4
Chances over Time	An estimated 7.8% of Americans will experience PTSD at some point in their lives. 4
Within the Mental Health System	Almost 50% of all outpatient mental health patients have PTSD. 2

PTSD is common in the United States. Any victim of a traumatic event is at risk for PTSD, though most do not develop the disorder. A large percent of patients within the mental health system, however, do suffer with PTSD.

Demographics: Diagnosis and risk among groups

Women and PTSD	An estimated 1 out of 10 women develops PTSD. Women are about twice as likely as men to develop PTSD. 2, 4
Diagnosis Across Gender	10 percent of women will receive diagnoses of PTSD, while only five percent of men are diagnosed with the disorder. 14
Children and Trauma	Children are less likely to experience PTSD after trauma than adults, especially if they are under 10 years of age. 1
Race and PTSD Prevalence	The lifetime prevalence of PTSD was highest among Blacks (8.7%), intermediate among Hispanics and Whites (7.4%), and lowest among Asians (4.0%) 1
Race and Treatment	All non-white groups were less likely to seek treatment for PTSD than Whites, and fewer than half of minorities sought treatment. 1
Exposure to War	3 out of 10 individuals who have spent civilian or military time in a war zone will develop PTSD. 14

Anyone is susceptible to PTSD. Women are much more likely to develop and be diagnosed with PTSD. Children are less likely under a certain age. Non-white populations are slightly more likely to develop PTSD, though they are often less likely to receive treatment. Combat exposure of all kinds is a significant risk factor.

Links & Comorbidities: Diagnosis and risk among groups

Hereditary Links	There is evidence that susceptibility to PTSD is hereditary. Approximately 30% of the variance in PTSD is caused from genetics alone. 6
PTSD and The Brain	The prefrontal cortex, amygdala, and hippocampus have been identified as being altered in patients with PTSD. 8
Anxiety Disorders	Panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorders (GAD), and PTSD share 60% of the same genetic variance. 6
Substance Dependency	Alcohol, nicotine, and drug dependence share greater than 40% genetic similarities with PTSD patients. 6
Substance Abuse	Individuals suffering from PTSD engage in abuse of illegal and prescription drugs at a rate 3 times the general population. 14
Traumatic Brain Injury	Patients with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) often are also at risk for PTSD, including mild TBI. 12
Suicide	Studies have shown that PTSD alone is significantly associated with suicidal ideation or attempts. Research is ongoing. 11

While research is still ongoing, there is evidence of genetic markers for greater PTSD susceptibility. PTSD is categorized as an anxiety disorder and shares physical characteristics of these conditions.

Research suggests a tendency towards both drug abuse and suicide in patients with PTSD. Particularly in military populations, traumatic brain injury is often a cause of PTSD.

Military Members: Connections between service and PTSD

Tendencies toward PTSD	3 out of 10 individuals who have spent civilian or military time in a war zone will develop PTSD. 2
General Prevalence	10 – 30% of veterans develop PTSD in their lifetimes. 2,4
Across Military Branches	Members of the Marines and Army are four times more likely to develop PTSD as those serving in the Air Force or Navy. 14
Current Diagnosis Rates	20% of the soldiers who've been deployed in the past 6 years have PTSD. 2
Recent Increases	In the past year, the number of diagnosed cases in the military jumped 50%. 2
Sexual Assault and PTSD	17% of combat troops are women; 71% of female military personnel develop PTSD due to sexual assault within the ranks. 2
Comparing Wars	Gulf War: 3 - 7% returning vets have PTSD Afghanistan: 6 – 11% returning vets have PTSD Iraq: 12 – 20% returning vets have PTSD 2, 4

Military members are at significantly higher risk of PTSD than in the general population. That said, the majority of military members do not experience PTSD.

Diagnosis of PTSD has increased, particularly for combat veterans and sufferers of sexual assault.

Diagnosis & Treatment: Analysis of the state of treatment

Diagnosis Increases	Since the introduction of the DSM-IV, the number of possible events which might be used to diagnose PTSD has increased in studies by as much as 50%. 9
Delayed Onset	About a quarter of PTSD cases did not appear until 9 to 25 months after the traumatic event. 13
Treatment Successes	PTSD is treatable. 80 percent of those diagnosed with PTSD, given proper treatment, enter remission after 5 years. 15
Benefits From a Diagnosis	A PTSD diagnosis can qualify a military member for a 50 percent disability rating and a medical retirement that includes a pension and other benefits. 16

Diagnosis of PTSD in general has increased and its definition has been refined. Its appearance is often delayed, but it remains a very treatable condition.

A correct diagnosis can often help connect patients to various resources.

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