

WOMEN'S HEALTH



life and family disruption; and prior victimization, such as sexual abuse, are all associated with the severity of post-deployment PTSD symptoms in women. ([Journal of Psychiatric Research](#), February 2014)

• **Women aged 50 to 75 face no extra risk of breast cancer** if they get a screening mammogram every two years instead of every year, according to a national study led by a researcher from the San Francisco VA Medical Center. Less frequent screening means less overall risk of false positives. Not every health provider abides by the recommendations of this research, however. Women ages 40 to 50 and those older than 75 should talk with their health care providers about the risks and benefits of having mammograms and make a decision based on their individual needs. ([JAMA Internal Medicine](#), May 13, 2013)

• **Many servicewomen believe that the disadvantages of reporting sexual assault outweigh the advantages.** A study by investigators from the Iowa City VA Medical Centers found that fear of a career-threatening

reprisal could be a factor in whether or not to report an assault. Other issues included concerns about confidentiality, and a belief that nothing would be done if the assault was reported. ([American Journal of Preventative Medicine](#), July 2014)

• **Taking soy tablets doesn't boost bone density or help ease menopause symptoms,** according to Miami VA researchers. In their study, older women who had recently reached menopause took either 200 milligrams of a soy tablet or a placebo each day. After two years, there were no differences in bone density in the spines, hips, or femurs of women in the study. ([Archives of Internal Medicine](#), Aug. 8, 2011)

• **Maintaining the social support of military peers** after active duty is associated with better physical health among women Veterans, regardless of whether or not they have PTSD, according to VA Puget Sound Health Care System researchers. They analyzed the extent to which women Veterans maintained the social support of their military friends against the way they

reported on their own physical health, and the number of times they used VA health care. ([Journal of Traumatic Stress](#), December 2013)

• **VA has launched a comprehensive study of the health of Vietnam-era women Veterans.** A five-year multisite study is examining the prevalence of PTSD and other mental and physical conditions in women Veterans, and the relationship of PTSD to their experiences while deployed. ([VA Cooperative Study Program #579](#))

For more information on VA studies on women's health and other key topics relating to Veterans' health, please visit www.research.va.gov/topics

VA researchers are looking at a wide range of health issues related to women Veterans, including chronic diseases, reproductive health, cancer, mental health issues, and military occupational hazards.

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