An Overview of PTSD and Treatment Perspectives Among Native American Veterans

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History of PTSD and Native American Veterans

- What is PTSD
- History of PTSD
- A brief history of Native American veterans
Literature Review

- 5 to 17% of returning Veterans suffer from combat related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Research regarding Native American Veterans is lacking

- Native Veterans greatly underutilize services to treat PTSD

- Equine Therapy is becoming more popular for treatment of PTSD
Purpose and Participants

This study seeks to gain an understanding of:

• Attitudes toward PTSD
• Perceptions about PTSD
• Willingness to engage in therapy
• Barriers to seeking treatment
• Facilitators of treatment

• Sample - 588 individuals who identify themselves as Native American Veterans.
  • 478 male
  • 110 female
  • represent all branches of the U.S. military.
Instruments

• cross-sectional survey design

• Containing 40 items

• 39 quantitative

• 1 qualitative

• Administered via Survey Monkey.
Procedure

• Contacted social media sites for:
  
  • All federally recognized Veteran Service Organizations
  • All state and federally recognized Native American Nations

• Organizations and nations were asked to help circulate word of the study

• Participants had the option of requesting a hard copy

• Results were imported into SPSS

• Descriptive statistics of data ran.

• A content analysis was conducted on qualitative data
Results

Gender
- Men: 82%
- Woman: 18%

Branch of Service
- Navy: 48%
- Army: 24%
- Marine Corps: 19%
- Air Force: 16%
- Coast Guard: 2%
Results: Barriers to treatment

- Appearing weak
- Denial that problem exists
- Drug/Alcohol Use
- Fear of what others think
- Lack of Tx. Options
- Lack of resources
- Discomfort w/ Diagnosis

The chart shows the frequency of these barriers, with 'Fear of what others think' being the highest (4) and 'Lack of Tx. Options' being the lowest (3).
Results: facilitators of Tx.
Results: likeliness to engage in TX./healing
Results

Likelihood to Engage in AAT

- Very Likely: 28.58%
- Somewhat Likely: 15.71%
- Neutral: 10%
- Somewhat Unlikely: 25%
- Very Unlikely: 20.71%

Perceived Helpfulness of AAT

- Very Helpful: 33%
- Somewhat Helpful: 30%
- Neutral: 25%
- Somewhat Unhelpful: 7%
- Not at all Helpful: 5%
Results

A aware of others diagnosed with PTSD

- Yes: 89%
- No: 7%
- Unsure: 4%

Did your perception of this person change?

- Positively: 13.5%
- Negatively: 3%
- Unsure: 11.5%
- Did not change: 72%
Do most veterans who suffer from PTSD receive adequate treatment?

- Yes: 77%
- No: 19%
- Unsure: 4%
Veterans’ Voices

• Natives need a different approach to treatment. A trusted brother, a friend, etc. It needs to be based on the old ways included with modern technology.8

• There are so many barriers to getting help that it's not worth the frustration of the process. I want to see an open forum group where it's completely anonymous, no paperwork necessary to get help. 12

• Native veterans will open and trust other native veterans, military veterans speak a different language. I would only go to Groups run by veterans.13
Veterans’ Voices

• There is extreme bias experienced by this person from counselors. The counselors ... lack a knowledge and experience with military and native peoples. 77

• The distance to travel for treatment is very bad. Most don't have anyone to go to who understands. 37

• A well grounded knowledge of the cultural background of the patient will be of great assistance and would give focus toward the healing process. 175
Discussion

• Native Veterans are generally unsatisfied with services provided them and view them as being inadequate.

• They desire programs that have staff that are veterans and who can understand their experiences in the military as well as their Native background.

• More facilities and programs designed to treat PTSD should be formed near major populations of Native Veterans.

• Cost for participation in programs should be significantly reduced or free to participants.

• Programs should be designed to address both primary and secondary symptoms of PTSD, such as drug or alcohol abuse.

• Native American Veterans are not likely to have other Native Veterans view them negatively due to having PTSD.
Limitations and Future Directions of Study

• The survey relied on self-report

• Native American are not a homogenous group, cultural aspects can differ slightly from tribe to tribe.

• More studies needed to replicate and strengthen research

• A more detailed look at differences between cohorts should be conducted to see if preferred aspects of treatment differ

• Qualitative study should also be done to provide depth of information on key findings

• Pilot studies should be conducted
For more information regarding results from the survey please contact Greg Urquhart at Greg.Urquhart@wsu.edu