



The Gulf War Era Cohort and Biorepository Newsletter

2017

Thank you!

Thank you for participating in the Gulf War Era Cohort and Biorepository research project! Research helps us better understand Veterans' health and develop better care and treatments. Your participation plays an important role in helping to improve the health of Veterans. VA research would not be possible without you!

Project Updates

The Gulf War Era Cohort and Biorepository (GWECB) pilot project (CSP #585) was developed to collect information and blood samples that can be used by researchers to study the health and health conditions of Veterans who served during the 1990-1991 Gulf War Era. We also wanted to learn more about how to improve processes in research projects like this.

Our goal was to enroll 3,000 Veterans in the pilot project. By the end of our recruitment phase, a total of 1,276

Veterans were enrolled. This was a lower response than we expected, but we learned many lessons about how to improve our recruitment processes. We also heard helpful feedback from Gulf War Era Veterans. This showed us that we need to talk to more Veterans to hear their thoughts about this and other research projects.

Enrollment into the cohort and biorepository ended in May 2016. In August 2016 we started a new phase of the project that focuses on the Veteran voice. During this phase we have been speaking with Veterans across the country through focus group discussions and interviews. Our goal is to hear from Veterans about their thoughts and preferences so we can improve Gulf War research and better serve Gulf War Era Veterans. We are now analyzing the information collected during this phase.

For more information, visit our website at: <http://www.research.va.gov/programs/csp/585> or contact Kristina Felder at 1-888-878-6890 and press 7379.

What will happen with the information and blood samples?

The health information and blood samples you provided can be used by researchers to help answer questions about the health of Gulf War Era Veterans. Research is a very time-intensive process, and it can sometimes take years to come to conclusions.

We created a process for reviewing requests from researchers who want to use the health information and blood samples for new studies. This process was completed in late 2016 and we have begun reviewing requests from researchers.

The first approved data request was from Dr. Steven Coughlin, who will be conducting a study about women Veterans' health. This and other studies can help us better understand the health and health conditions of Gulf War Era Veterans and possibly lead to better health care for Veterans.

The CSP #585 research team has also been reviewing the data collected to understand more about the Veterans who are enrolled in the project. The figures on this page show information about CSP #585 participants.

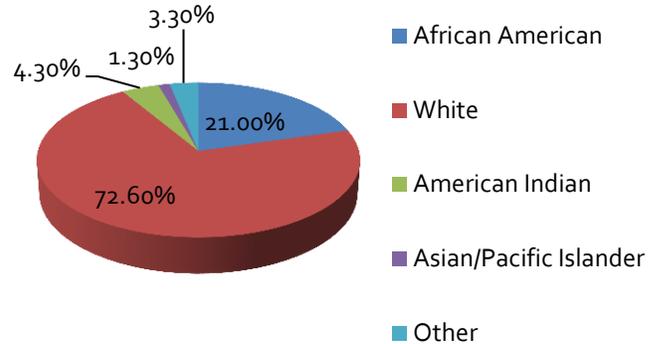
To date, we have presented two posters with summary information at national conferences. Please visit our website at

<http://www.research.va.gov/programs/csp/585/products.cfm> to view these posters and other presentations we have given about the project.

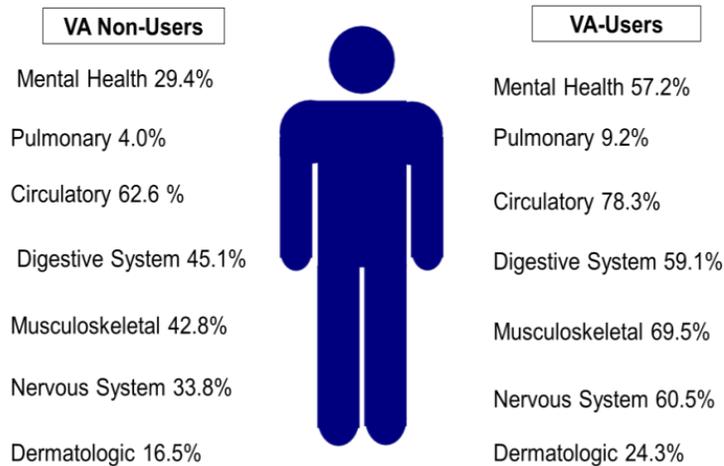


22.6% women

75.6% men



Self-Reported Diagnoses by Organ System



The figures above show a breakdown of the demographic characteristics of CSP #585 participants.

The figure to the left shows the health conditions that CSP #585 participants reported. The numbers indicate the percentage of participants who reported these symptoms. For example, 45.1% of participants who do not use the VA for health care (“VA Non-Users”) reported digestive system issues, while 59.1% of participants who do use the VA for health care (“VA-Users”) reported digestive system concerns.

Spotlight: Research Opportunity for Gulf War Era Veterans

You can continue participating in other Gulf War research projects. Below we have listed one active project that you may be interested in.

Million Veteran Program (MVP) Principal Investigators: John Concato, M.D. and J. Michael Gaziano, M.D.

MVP is a national, voluntary research program funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Office of Research and Development. The goal of MVP is to partner with Veterans receiving care in the VA Health Care System to study how genes affect health. At this time the study is recruiting only those who use the VA for healthcare.

More information online: www.research.va.gov/mvp

MVP Information Center (toll-free): 866-441-6075

