

SLEEP

SLEEP DISORDERS AMONG THE VETERAN COMMUNITY



WHAT IS SLEEP DISORDER?

Sleep disorders are conditions that result in changes in the way that you sleep.

A sleep disorder can affect your overall health, safety, and quality of life. Sleep deprivation can affect your ability to drive safely and increase your risk of other health problems.

KEY FACT

Likelihood of clinical insomnia increased by **50%** in those with mTBI.

SLEEP DISRUPTIONS

- Endocrine Dysfunction
- Chronic Pain
- Post-Traumatic Stress
- Brain Injury history
- Restless Leg Syndrome

MILITARY EXPOSURES

- OPTEMPO
- Chronic Stress
- Brain Injury History
- Post-Traumatic Stress
- Time zone changes

COMMONS SLEEP DISORDERS IN THE VETERAN COMMUNITY

Three out of four (75%) post-9/11 veterans report at least one issue with their sleep. That number increases if the veteran has suffered a brain injury and/or was diagnosed with a mental health condition (anxiety, chronic stress, Post-Traumatic Stress).

For the brain to maintain functioning at the highest level possible, it requires sleep.

A DoD study showed that **56%** of service members reported getting less sleep than required to perform their military duties.

Inadequate sleep negatively impacts the service member's military effectiveness; demonstrating reduced ability to execute complex tasks, communicate effectively, maintain vigilance, and sustain proper alertness required to carry out duties.



SLEEP

SLEEP AND TBI

Sleep deprivation may account for the link between TBI and depression symptoms among service members.

- The number of TBIs an individual has suffered increased the rate of sleep disorders by 50%.
- Blast injuries are more commonly associated with insomnia and anxiety compared to blunt trauma injuries.
- Of those deployed that experienced an mTBI, 77% reported sleep disorders.

SLEEP AND PTS

Sleep deprivation is a core symptom of PTSD and a factor that can exacerbate PTSD daytime symptoms, such as hypervigilance and irritability.

- Service members with insomnia prior to trauma exposure are more likely to develop PTSD following the exposure, indicating that disturbed sleep increases vulnerability to PTSD.
- Studies show that insomnia and recurrent nightmares are independently associated with a number of negative sequelae, including suicidal ideation and behavior, over and above the effects of PTSD and depression.



Did You Know?

During sleep, neurons cease firing at their normal **“awake”** rate and allow the brain to open (approx. 60% more) to allow cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) to enter the **“relaxed brain”** and rid it of its toxins, specifically the amyloid-beta and tau proteins.

This makes sleep an important and necessary regenerative process, especially if you suffer from a brain injury.

RECOMMENDATIONS & RESOURCES

Ways to improve sleep:

- Set a schedule: Sleep/wake at the same time daily.
- Exercise 20-30 min/day.
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine after 4pm.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Create a room for sleep:
 - No cell phones/TV or blue light
 - Cool room, ideal temp. 60-65 degrees
- Below are cell phone applications that assist with sleep:



ARTICLES

- *What's Really Keeping You Up At Night?* - Havok Journal, December 10, 2020
- *The Complete Guide to Optimal Health* - Havok Journal, March 3, 2021

PODCASTS

- **Joe Rogan Experience** - #1109: Matthew Walker, "Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams"
- **Groundtruth Podcast** - #4: Delta Operator Chris VanSant, Mastering Sleep