Soldiers Who Attempt Suicide Often Have No History of Mental Health Issues

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Reuters [1]

New research suggests more than one-third of U.S. Army soldiers who attempt suicide have never received a mental health diagnosis. Researchers looked at data on 9,650 active-duty Army soldiers who attempted suicide between 2004 and 2009 and found 36 percent did not have a past diagnosis of mental illness. According to the authors, these soldiers may have had mental health issues that were unreported. Soldiers who are struggling may not reach out for help if they do not think they need treatment or because of the prejudice associated with mental health issues. The study was unable to determine what proportion of these soldiers had untreated mental health issues or how a past diagnosis might affect suicide risk. An editorial that accompanied the published study indicated that mental health care for soldiers is becoming more widely available in a variety of settings. “Since soldiers without a mental health diagnosis are unlikely to be seen in mental health clinics . . . a focus on prevention in other settings appears warranted,” wrote Mark Reger of the Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System and colleagues.

Spark Extra! Read the study abstract [2].

Links within this resource

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