



THE VETERANS METRICS INITIATIVE (TVMI) SNAPSHOT OF SPECIAL FORCES VETERANS

Data collected from study participants at Waves 1, 2, and 3

Issue 10



- Weighted survey data on 7,200 respondents representing 48,965 newly separated veterans were analyzed to understand how many Special Operations (SO) veterans separated in Fall 2016 and how the experience of being a member of Special Operations units affected their post-separation experiences in the vocational and health domains.
 - 7% reported participation with Special Operations (3,525 of 48,965).
 - There was a higher proportion of male personnel in the Special Ops than in the non-SO group (90% male in the SO group vs. 84% in the non-SO group).
 - There were no differences in race or ethnicity by Special Ops status (34% minority race/ethnicity in the SO group vs. 31% in the non-SO group)

VOCATION

- The employment rate of Special Ops veterans compared to non-SO veterans was time-varying:
 - Similar at Wave 1: 60% for SOs vs. 57% for non-SOs
 - Higher at Wave 2: 73% for SOs vs. 68% for non-SOs
 - Similar at Wave 3: 72% for SOs vs. 72% for non-SOs
- Current participation in school or training programs did not vary by Special Ops status across waves:
 - Special Ops ranged from 29-30% while non-SOs ranged from 32-33%



EXPOSURE

- Special Ops personnel were significantly more likely to report Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) than non-SO personnel:
 - 28% of Special Ops personnel vs. 16% non-SO reported that experiences consistent with TBI had occurred during their military service, such as seeing stars, losing consciousness, or not remembering their injury
 - 35% of Special Ops personnel vs. 20% non-SO reported having symptoms at Wave 3 that they suspected were related to a TBI



HEALTH

- There were minor or no differences by Special Ops status across Waves 1-3 for health behaviors:
 - Smoking: 24% for SOs at each wave vs. 25-26% for non-SOs
 - Binge drinking: 17-22% for SOs vs. 16-18% for non-SOs
 - Obesity differed only at Wave 3, with 21% for SO vs. 26% for non-SOs



PTSD

- Special Ops personnel were more likely to meet criteria for probable PTSD at any time point (based on a combination of Wave 1, 2, and 3 screener scores):
 - 38% for SOs vs. 28% for non-SOs

