



Women Veterans Health Care – Strategic Goals and Priorities for Research

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WOMEN VETERANS
HEALTH CARE



VA
HEALTH
CARE | Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

Women Represent

- >15% of Active Duty military
- 18% of National Guard/Reserves
- 11.6% of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) Veterans
- 6.5 % of VA health care users



The Changing Face of VA



- Young women
- Frequent visits
- Service-connected disabilities
- Maternity care
- Working women
- Complex co morbidities including mental health needs

The Changing Face of VA



- Aging women largest sub-population
- Group with greatest gap in market penetration
- Menopausal needs
- Geriatric care
- Inpatient/extended stays
- Pain management
- Grief and loss and isolation

Mission

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

*You served, you deserve
★ the best care anywhere.*



- Ensure all women Veterans receive **equitable**, **high-quality**, and **comprehensive** health care in a sensitive and safe environment at all VA facilities
- Be a national leader in the provision of health care for women Veterans, thereby raising the standard of care for all women

Strategic Goals

- Transform health care delivery for women Veterans
- Develop, implement and influence VA health policy as it relates to women Veterans
- Develop, implement and influence VA education initiatives
- Drive the focus and set the agenda to increase understanding of the effects of military service on women Veterans' lives
 - Focus on Research Integration: support highest utility research for evolution of program, greater understanding and improved outcomes



GOAL 1: Transform health care delivery for women Veterans

Implementing Comprehensive Care

Complete primary care from one designated Women's Health Primary Care Provider at one site (including CBOCs)



- Care for acute and chronic illness
- Gender-specific primary care
- Preventive services
- Mental Health services
- Coordination of care
- Model for Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT)
- Measured with women's health primary care evaluation tools (WATCH Tool)

Status of Comprehensive Health Implementation

Data sources

- Site Visits Assessment Tool—now in 4th year, includes data and capabilities assessment, randomly selected sites-24 per year
- Annual WATCH: Women’s Assessment Tool for Comprehensive Health- “self administered” by VAMC
- All access on VSSC
 - Includes data and capabilities
 - Includes model of comprehensive care at each site and CBOC
 - Data on numbers of Designated Women’s Health providers

WATCH 2011 (WATCH 2013 submitted 11/2013)

- Models of care by site-Model 1,2 or 3
- “Number of Women’s Clinics” example:

According to the FY 2011 Women’s Assessment Tool for Comprehensive Health (WATCH) survey, VHA reported (and has by site number) :

- Total Model 1 = 833 clinics
- Total Model 2 = 101 clinics
- Total Model 3 = 75 clinics “comprehensive women’s clinics”

Data sources (continued)

- PACT *WH* clinic assignment in PCMM- regardless of how many women are in provider panel
- Several VSSC workbooks including
 - Enrollees and Users— without employees health visits
 - Top/all diagnostic categories
 - Stop codes data
- WHEI Sourcebooks Vols 1, 2 and soon, 3
 - WHEI has developed many variables and definitions including race/ethnicity, “conditions”, rural urban—DUA process

More new data sources and definitions

- Designated WH PCPs in FY12(DAWC list):
 - 99.3% of 140 HCSs had at least one designated WH PCP
 - 95.3% of 150 Medical Centers had at least one designated WH PCP
 - 75.0% of 795 CBOCs had at least one designated WH PCP
- We have compiled a list of every Designated Women's Health Provider (DWHP) as of FY 2012
 - Running data on Patient satisfaction
 - Some clinical performance outcomes data underway

Women's Comprehensive Health Expanded Focus

- **Cardiac care in women**
 - Following narrowing of gender disparities, issues of women at risk for cardiac disease persist
 - Workgroup examining status of care
- **Breast Cancer**
 - Tracking of abnormal test results
 - Breast Cancer Clinical Case Registry-date soon
 - Breast CA workgroup conducting surveys
- **Non-VA care evaluation**
- **Utilization and productivity of GYN care**

**Subject to funding*

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION



**WOMEN VETERANS
HEALTH CARE**

Comprehensive health issues-High Morbidity and mortality risk

- Lung CA and smoking in women—no current project
 - NEW Lung CT pilot in VA—evaluation by gender?
- Colorectal CA screening in VA?
- Interpersonal Violence- VA has new policy, standing up new screening, new practice with POC's at medical center
 - Key research underway but lots of room for more

Comprehensive Health: Expansion in Reproductive Health

- Focus on preconception issues
- Healthy pregnancy, getting maternity outcome data
- Reproductive Mental Health issues
- Maternity care coordination- required designee at each medical center
- Implementation and diffusion of best practices-much work to be done
- Links with DoD Partners

Not just babies.... Reproductive health through the lifespan

- VA Emergency medicine and women-including abnormal bleeding in pregnancy, cardiac care, mental health care
 - Interdisciplinary team training– Outcomes?
- Aging issues, menopause
- Urinary and incontinence issues, provision of toolkits and best practices for clinic approaches
- Use of telehealth for women's health precepting, Gynecology, colposcopy



GOAL 2: Develop, implement and influence VA health policy as it relates to women Veterans

Culture Change

- Women Veterans Health Care is leading development of a VA-wide communication plan to **enhance the language, practice and culture** of VA to be **more inclusive of women Veterans**
- **How do we measure effect?**
 - What is impact on women Veterans perception of care
 - Effect on outreach and enrollment/ by age cohorts
 - In reach- effect on VA workforce

2008 USH Report

- Defined **comprehensive primary care** for women
- Made recommendations on how facilities can improve care delivery
- Handbook 1330.01: **Recommendations became policy**

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

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Report of the Under Secretary for Health Workgroup

Provision of Primary Care to Women Veterans

Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards
Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group

November 2008

 Department of
Veterans Affairs

Revised VHA Handbook 1330.01: “VHA Services for Women Veterans”

- Published 2010, Outlines specific services at facilities and CBOCs and defines Comprehensive Primary Care for Women Veterans
- Requires women be seen by designated Women’s Health Primary Care Providers
- Offers three clinic models
 - General Primary Care Clinics, Separate but Shared Space, Women’s Health Center
- Details safety and security requirements
- Establishes systematic data collection process



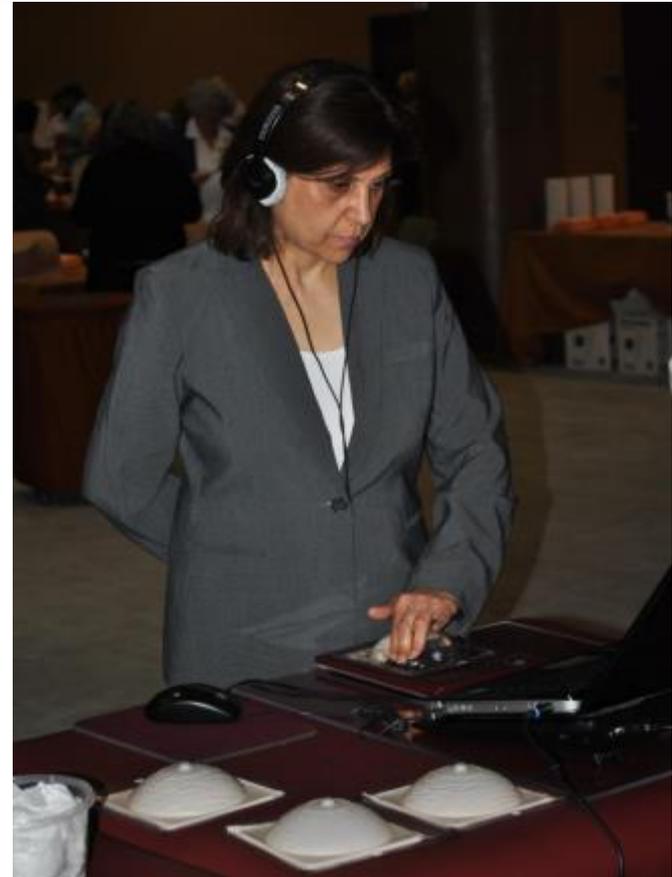
GOAL 3: Develop, implement and influence VA education initiatives

Women's Health Education

- National Women's Health Mini-Residency Program (live and online)
 - More than 1,850 Primary Care providers educated in Basic and Advanced Women's Health Care
 - Flagship education model for VA
- SimLEARN partnership: large mini-residency, task trainer dissemination
- New Women's health topics on My Vehu Campus and TMS
- New curriculum on Reproductive Mental Health
- Monthly provider audio-conferences
- Upcoming VA Women's Health Research Conference, Summer 2014

Women's Health Education FY 13-14

- Nursing Education
 - Mini-Residencies
 - Audio Conferences
- Women's Health Training for Emergency Medicine Providers
Emergency room curriculum on virtual university
 - <https://www.myvehucampus.com>
- Grants for innovative education projects, Telehealth pilots





GOAL 4: Drive the focus and set the agenda to increase understanding of the effects of military service on women Veterans' lives

Major Goal: Understand the effects of military service on women's lives

- Women's Health Evaluation Initiative : WHEI
- Practice Based Research Networks (PBRNs)
- Studies about post-deployment health, combat and trauma exposure, gender-specific, reproductive and mental health conditions

Systematic review of VA Women's Health Research:

http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/research/abstracts.cfm?Project_ID=2141701051

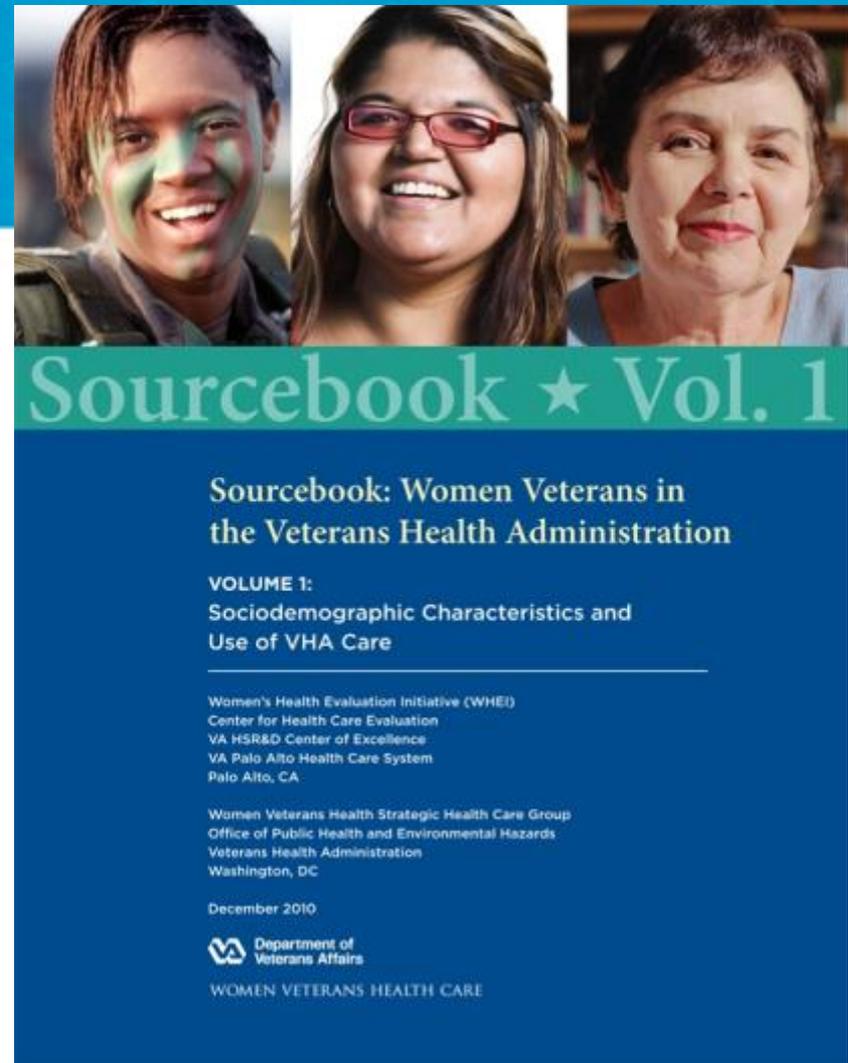
Literature Search:

http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/womens_health/search.cfm

WHEI Sourcebooks and data definitions

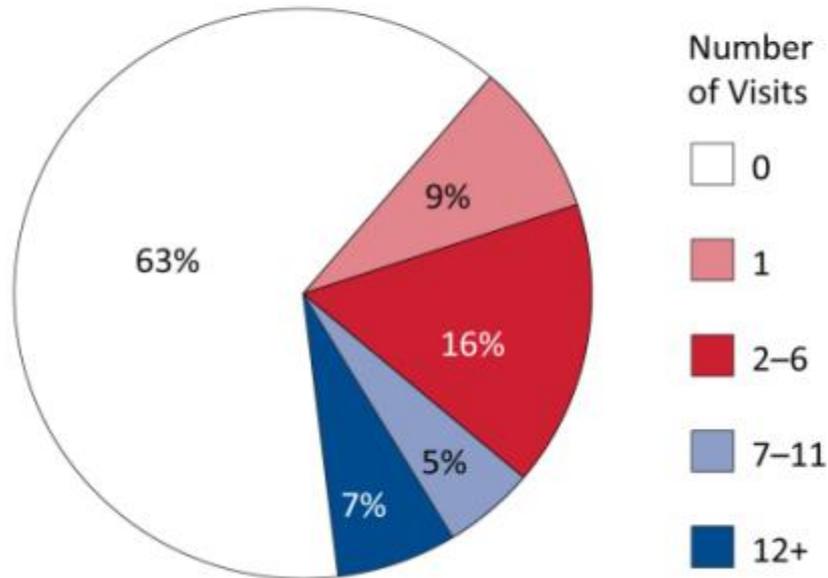
- Volume 1: Sociodemographics and Use of VHA Care
 - Future volumes focus on:
 - Analysis of fee basis data
 - Diagnoses
 - Race and Ethnicity
 - **Challenges met:** data quality issues re: employee vs. Veteran data, changes over time
- Sourcebook Volume 1:**

<http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/publications.asp#research>



Mental Health Use

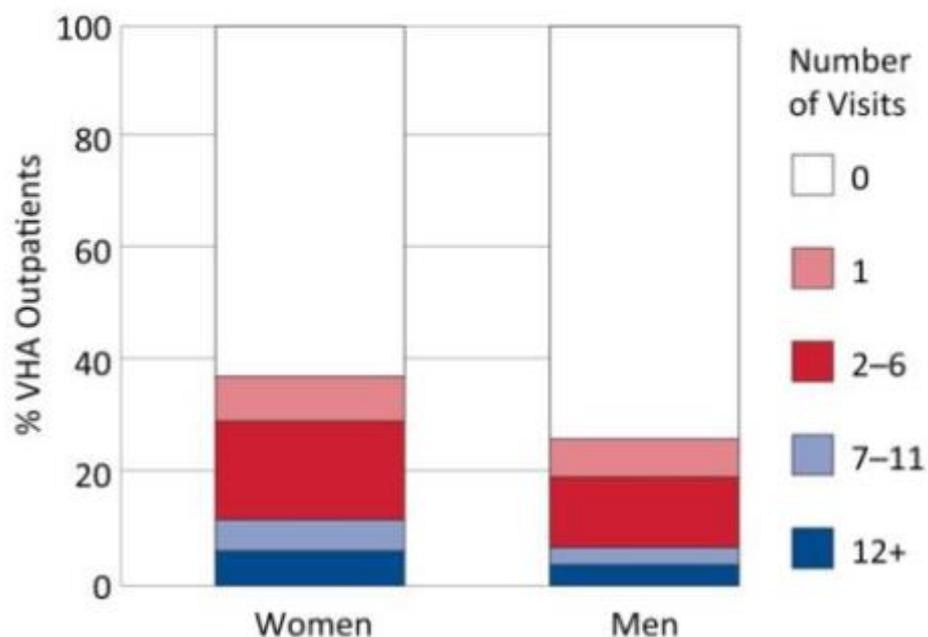
**Proportion of women Veteran VHA outpatients
by frequency of mental health visits, FY09**



Source: Women's Health Evaluation Initiative (WHEI) and the Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group; Sourcebook: Women Veterans in the Veterans Health Administration V1: Sociodemographic Characteristics and Use of VHA Care, 2011.

Women Use MH more than Men

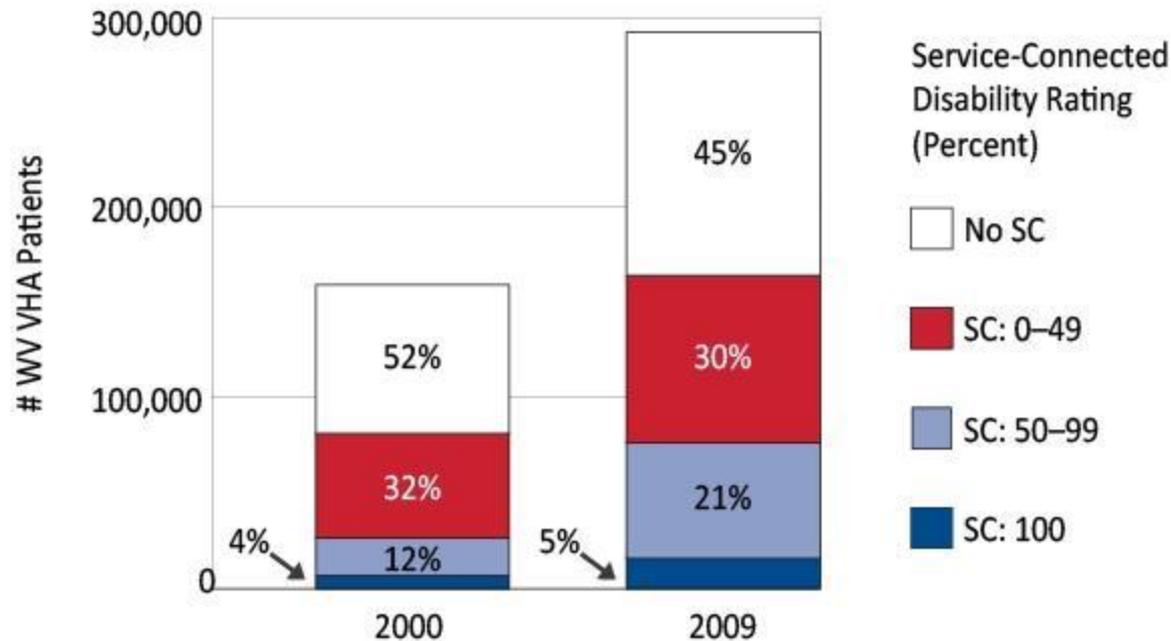
Proportion of women and men Veteran VHA outpatients by frequency of mental health visits, FY09



Source: Women's Health Evaluation Initiative (WHEI) and the Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group; Sourcebook: Women Veterans in the Veterans Health Administration V1: Sociodemographic Characteristics and Use of VHA Care, 2011.

Increase in Women with Service-Connected Disabilities

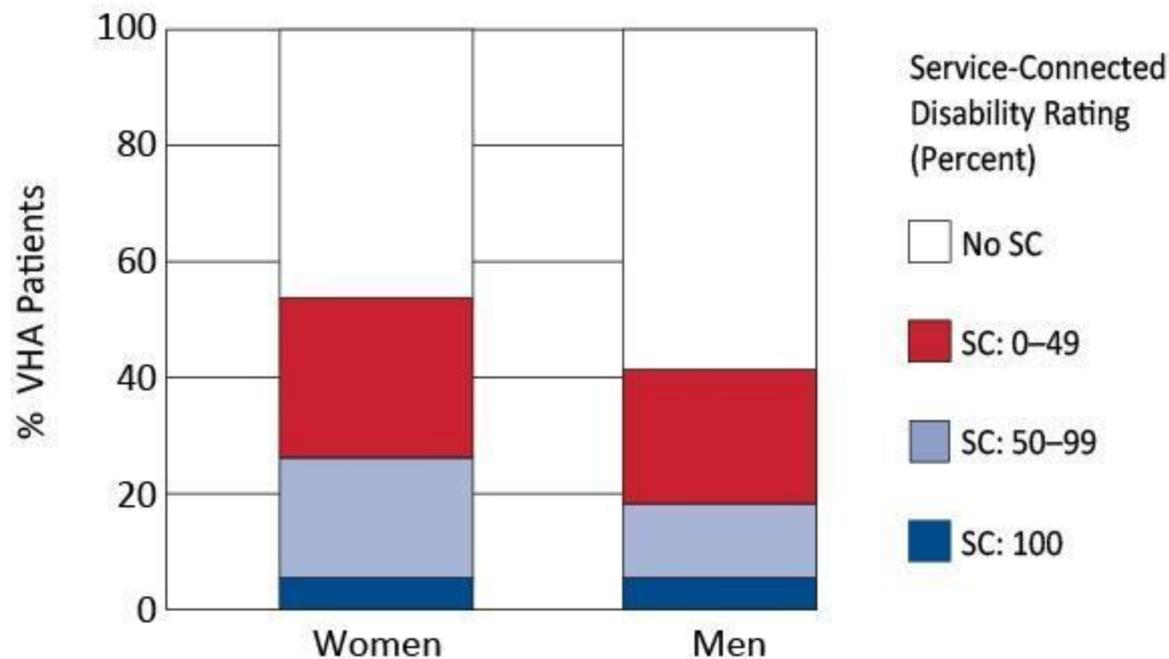
**Service-connected disability status among women
Veteran VHA patients, FY00 and FY09**



Source: Women's Health Evaluation Initiative (WHEI) and the Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group; Sourcebook: Women Veterans in the Veterans Health Administration V1: Sociodemographic Characteristics and Use of VHA Care, 2011.

More Service Connected Status among Women than Men

Service-connected disability status among Veteran VHA patients, by gender, FY09



Source: Women's Health Evaluation Initiative (WHEI) and the Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group; Sourcebook: Women Veterans in the Veterans Health Administration V1: Sociodemographic Characteristics and Use of VHA Care, 2011.

Sourcebook Volume 2



- Sociodemographics
- and use of Non-VA fee Care
- Urban and rural comparisons

- <http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/latestinformation/publications.asp>
- Volume 3 will be released later in 2014

Understanding Women Veterans

- National Survey of Women Veterans 2014
 - 38000+ participants through telephone interviews
 - Report due out next year on access, quality perception, barriers
- More to come soon
 - Women Vietnam Veterans Study
 - Operation Enduring Freedom / Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Cohort Study



Key Research Questions

What do we need more research on?

- Implementation in system: providers, PACT, PCC, etc
 - Comprehensive health care outcomes
 - Differences by subgroups, geography
- Telehealth efforts-evaluation of
 - Outcomes
 - Patient perceptions and
 - Veteran engagement
- Education outcomes
- Diffusion of best practices



More research Strategies

- Develop, evaluate, and disseminate interventions to address:
 - Evaluate Veterans' access by gender
 - Targeted outreach by age
 - Awareness of VA care and services for women
 - Comprehensive care needs
 - Care delivery preferences
 - Health care equity and quality by race/ethnicity





Questions?

www.womenshealth.va.gov