Database & Methods Cyberseminar Series

Ascertaining Veterans’ Vital Status: VA Data Sources for Mortality Ascertainment and Cause of Death

Charles Maynard, PhD
Acting Associate Director, Seattle Denver COIN
Research Professor Emeritus, University of Washington
Database & Methods Cyberseminar Series

Informational seminars to help VA researchers understand how to use VA and non-VA data in research and quality improvement

Topics

• Application of VA and non-VA data to research and quality improvement questions

• Limitations of secondary data use

• Resources to support VA data use
### FY ‘17 Database & Methods Schedule

First Monday of the month*  |  1:00pm-2:00pm ET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/3/16</td>
<td>Overview of VA Data &amp; Research Uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/7/2016</td>
<td>Requesting Access to VA Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/5/2016</td>
<td>Healthcare Utilization with MedSAS &amp; CDW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/9/2017</td>
<td>VA Medicare Data (VA/CMS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/6/2017</td>
<td>Assessing Outpatient Utilization with VA Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/6/2017</td>
<td>Mortality Ascertainment &amp; Cause of Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/3/2017</td>
<td>Assessing Race &amp; Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/5/2017</td>
<td>Pharmacy Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/10/2017*</td>
<td>CAPRI/VistAWeb for EHR Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/7/2017</td>
<td>Comorbidity Measures Using VA and CMS Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/21/2017</td>
<td>Advanced Topics in Comorbidity Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/11/2017*</td>
<td>CDW microbiology, lab, &amp; pharmacy domains</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Schedule shifts by one week in event of VA holiday.

Visit our Education page for more information & registration links.
[www.virec.research.va.gov](http://www.virec.research.va.gov)
Database & Methods Cyberseminar Series

Ascertaining Veterans’ Vital Status: VA Data Sources for Mortality Ascertainment and Cause of Death

Charles Maynard, PhD
Acting Associate Director, Seattle Denver COIN
Research Professor Emeritus, University of Washington
• Identify data sources for Veteran vital status ascertainment
• Describe the contents and structure of the VA Vital Status Files and their appropriate use for mortality ascertainment
• Outline the respective strengths and limitations of available VA data sources for mortality ascertainment
• Identify other relevant sources of death data including the National Death Index and state death certificates
• Demonstrate how these data resources can be used in research studies
Poll Question #1

I am interested in VA data primarily due to my role as:

a. Principal investigator/Co-PI
b. Research staff (Project coordinator, data manager, programmer)
c. Clinical Staff
d. Operations Staff
e. Other—Please describe via the Q & A function
Poll Question #2

How would you rate your knowledge of methods to ascertain death dates for Veterans in the VA?

a. 1 (No knowledge)
b. 2
c. 3
d. 4
e. 5 (Expert)
Today’s Topics

• Data sources for Veteran vital status ascertainment

• VHA Vital Status Files

• Date of death project

• Data sources for Veteran & Non-Veteran mortality

• Other resources for mortality data

• Examples of using mortality data for research
Session Topics

• Data sources for Veteran vital status ascertainment
  • Sources in VHA Vital Status Files
  • Sources not in VHA Vital Status Files

• VHA Vital Status Files

• Date of death project

• Data sources for Veteran & Non-Veteran mortality

• Other resources for mortality data

• Examples of using mortality data for research
BIRLS Death File

Received from

- Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Beneficiary Identification and Records Locator System (BIRLS) database extract

Information Sources

- Family
- VHA hospitals
- VA National Cemetery Administration
- Social Security Administration (SSA)

Coverage

- Veterans known to VA

Update Schedule

- Monthly (complete overlay)

Location

- Austin Information Technology Center (AITC) and on VINCI

*Available in the VSF*
### VA/CMS Medicare Vital Status File

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Received from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Centers for Medicare &amp; Medicaid Services (CMS) annually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• SSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Medicare claims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other (e.g., family)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Veterans enrolled in Medicare (&gt;=65 years old or disabled)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Update Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Annual (deaths through April 2015)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Available from VIReC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Available in the VSF*
## SSA Death Master File

### Received from
- Social Security Administration

### Information sources
- Family members
- Funeral directors
- Post offices
- Financial institutions
- Other federal agencies
- State vital records agencies

### Coverage
- Individuals with SSN (first issued 1936)
- Includes deaths occurring outside United States
- More complete for over 65 population and for beneficiaries

### Update Schedule
- Weekly (and VA receives annual overlay)

### Location
- AITC

*Available in the VSF*
Medical SAS Inpatient File

Received from
- Austin Information Technology Center

Information source
- VistA PTF File (#45), Date of Disposition (DISDAY) and Type of Disposition (DISTYPE) fields

Coverage
- Inpatient deaths in VA facilities
- Inpatient deaths in non-VA hospitals

Updates
- Weekly

Location
- AITC (MedSAS)
- CDW

*Available in the VSF*
Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW)

Received from
- Corporate Data Warehouse

Information Source
- VISTA

Coverage
- Deaths verified by official source including VHA facilities, death certificate, and National Cemetery Administration

Update Schedule
- Daily

Location
- [CDW Patient 2.0 ]

03/2017
CDW

S Patient.S Patient Table

Columns:

- Date of Death
  - Date of death in SQL date format if complete and valid date in DateOfDeathText
- DateOfDeathText
- Deceased (created by CDW)
  - Flag set to ‘Y’ if there is information in the DateOfDeathText column and ‘N’ if DateOfDeathText column is empty.
CDW Limitations

• Current policy: Information to be entered from “official sources” only
  • VHA facility (if patient died in the VHA facility or while under VA auspices)
  • Death certificate
  • National Cemetery Administration
  • VHA Directive 1906

• CDW Date of Death Analysis and Vital Status File Comparison
CDW Limitations

“CDW Date of Death Analysis and Vital Status File Comparison”

Report Highlights

Results

• Dates of death are not recorded in the CDW for an estimated 30% of deaths.

• There is high agreement (91-99%) between dates of death recorded in the CDW and dates of death recorded in external sources that feed the VHA Vital Status File.

Recommendations

• Dates of death in the CDW should be augmented with deaths from other sources such as the VHA Vital Status File for more complete death ascertainment.

• Both the DateofDeath and Deceased columns should be used to identify deceased patients.

• We recommend adding the VistA Source of Notification field (Field .353) in the Patient File (File 2), which contains the source of the death notification, to the CDW.
Session Topics

- Data sources for Veteran vital status ascertainment
- VHA Vital Status Files
  - Structure and contents
  - Challenges in using the VHA VSF
- Date of death project
- Data sources for Veteran & Non-Veteran mortality
- Other resources for mortality data
- Examples of using mortality data for research
Poll Question #3

Have you ever used the VHA VSF?

a. Yes, both the Master File and Mini File
b. Yes, only the Mini File
c. Yes, only the Master File
d. No
VHA VSF Background

- Single sources are incomplete
- Using the National Death Index as the gold standard:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOD Source</th>
<th>Sensitivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIRLS</td>
<td>64-80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA/CMS Medicare</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>89-95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTF</td>
<td>5-12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Combined Sources provide 97.5%-98.3% sensitivity
- VIReC VA-NDI Mortality Data Merge Project
VHA VSF Creation

- Owner
  - Built by National Data Systems (NDS)
  - First available in October 2006

- Data access information
  - See VHA Data Portal website
    http://vaww.vhadataportal.med.va.gov/Home.aspx (Intranet only)

- Updated quarterly
- Veterans known to VA
  - VHA activity FY 1992 or later
  - VBA compensation and pension

- Two files + conversion file
  - Master, Mini, scrambled/real SSN
Construction of VHA VSF

VBA Data
- Medical SAS Inpatient Datasets and Census (PTF)
- Inpatient and Outpatient Encounter (ENC)
- Non-VA care or Fee Files (FEE)
- DSS Pharmacy Files (DSS)
- Enrollment (ENR)
- Veterans Service Network Corporate Mini Master File (VETSNET)

VHA Data
- One record per SSN/DOB/SEX
- Last Activity Dates by Source
- Inpatient Deaths

MVI Data
- Add MVI DOB and Sex

BIRLS
- Merge on SSN

CMS
- Merge on SSN

SSA Deaths
- Merge on SSN

VBA Data
- Merge on SSN, DOB & SEX

VHA Data
- Merge on SSN, DOB & SEX

MVI Data
- Merge on SSN

SSA Deaths
- Merge on SSN

BIRLS
- Merge on SSN

CMS
- Merge on SSN

One Record Per SSN, DOB, Sex

VSF MASTER File
- Select veterans
- Select ‘best’ DOB, SEX, DOD for each SSN
- Obtain Date of Last Activity for an SSN

VSF MINI File
- One record per SSN/DOB/SEX
- Last Activity Dates by Source
- Inpatient Deaths

One Record Per SSN 03/2017
More detail on VHA VSF Construction

Ascertaining Veterans’ Vital Status: VA Data Sources for Mortality Ascertainment and Cause of Death by Noreen Arnold, MS and Claire Hoffmire, PhD.
Seminar date: 5/4/2015

Ascertaining Veterans' Vital Status and Dates of Death: The VHA Vital Status File and Other Data Sources for Mortality Ascertainment in VA by Elizabeth Tarlov, PhD.
Seminar date: 7/14/2014
# Vital Status Files (April 5, 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master</th>
<th>Mini</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Veterans and Non-Veterans</td>
<td>• Veterans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One record per SSN/DOB/Sex combination</td>
<td>• One record per SSN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 125 variables</td>
<td>• Combined data from multiple Master records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 27,390,242 records</td>
<td>• 16 variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 18,829,560 SSNs</td>
<td>• 16,740,637 records (SSNs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 7,596,188 SSNs have more than one record (40% of SSNs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Vital Status Mini Contents (July 6, 2016)

(n=16,740,637)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT_LAST_DT</td>
<td>LAST HEALTHCARE OR BENEFIT ACTIVITY DATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT_LAST_DT_IND</td>
<td>LAST HEALTHCARE OR BENEFIT ACTIVITY DATE INDICATOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT_LAST_DT_SRC</td>
<td>LAST HEALTHCARE OR BENEFIT ACTIVITY DATE SOURCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOB</td>
<td>BEST DATE OF BIRTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOB_IND</td>
<td>BEST DATE OF BIRTH INDICATOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOB_SRC</td>
<td>DATA SOURCE BEST DATE OF BIRTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOD</td>
<td>BEST DATE OF DEATH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOD_IND</td>
<td>BEST DATE OF DEATH INDICATOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOD_SRC</td>
<td>DATA SOURCE BEST DATE OF DEATH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVING_IND</td>
<td>PRESUMED LIVING INDICATOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCRSSN</td>
<td>SCRAMBLED SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEX</td>
<td>BEST GENDER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE_AFTER_DTH_FLG</td>
<td>UTL_LAST_DT IS GT DOD +31 DAYS (0=NO 1=YES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTL_LAST_DT</td>
<td>LAST HEALTHCARE UTILIZATION DATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTL_LAST_DT_IND</td>
<td>LAST HEALTHCARE UTILIZATION DATE INDICATOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTL_LAST_DT_SRC</td>
<td>LAST HEALTHCARE UTILIZATION DATE SOURCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Best DOB and DOD on VSF Mini

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Birth Date Data Source</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIRLS DEATH FILE</td>
<td>1,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDICARE DATA</td>
<td>516,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM</td>
<td>14,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTPT/INPAT ENCOUNTER</td>
<td>464,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENROLLMENT SYSTEM</td>
<td>148,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEE BASIS</td>
<td>8,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVI</td>
<td>15,054,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PATIENT TREATMENT FILE</td>
<td>159,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL SECURITY DEATH FILE</td>
<td>30,474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VBA</td>
<td>241,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,639,505</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Death Date Data Source</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Death Date</td>
<td>10,518,393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIRLS DEATH FILE</td>
<td>146,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDICARE DATA</td>
<td>3,803,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEE BASIS</td>
<td>94,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PATIENT TREATMENT FILE</td>
<td>758,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL SECURITY DEATH FILE</td>
<td>1,318,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,639,505</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VHA VSF Mini on April 5, 2016

03/2017
Potential Challenges when using VHA VSF

- Demographics do not match
- Multiple dates of death
- Activity after date of death
- Erroneously recorded dates of death in sources

Note: VHA VSF should not be used for business operations regarding individual veterans
Possible Strategies for Matching Cohorts

• Use the Mini File for the initial search for deaths
  • Match on SSN

• Use the Master File to investigate unusual cases, for example:
  • Cohort DOB/Sex do not match Mini DOB/Sex
  • May be records on the Master File with matching demographics

• Activity after death
  • Check DOB/Sex for DOD sources on Master File
  • Are all DOD on Master File the same?
Possible Strategies for Matching Cohorts (cont.)

- Consider additional supplementary data sources
  - Use the NDI or State Vital Statistics Offices for cases lost to follow up, i.e.,
    - No death date
    - No VHA or VBA activity after end of follow up
  - CDW for individuals without activity after 1991 or very recent deaths
Session Topics

- Data sources for Veteran vital status ascertainment
- VHA Vital Status Files
- Date of death project
- Data sources for Veteran and Non-Veteran mortality
- Other resources for mortality data
- Examples of using mortality data for research
Date of Death Project

• The Date of Death Project includes leadership and participation from VHA, VBA, and NCA

• Purpose: improve VA ascertainment and documentation of death of individuals known to the VA

• Develop processes and procedures to improve accuracy and completeness of date of death

• Master Veteran Index (MVI) will be authoritative service for date of death (First Phase)

• Dates of death will be synchronized across Administrations (Second Phase)

• Electronic Verification of Vital Events (EVVE) is now available on a limited basis

06/2016
Date of Death Project (cont.)

EVVE – Electronic Verification of Vital Events

- NAPHSIS
  - National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems
- Online query system of state vital statistics data bases
  - Death Certificates
  - Birth Certificates
Date of Death Project (cont.)

First Phase

• Final phases of implementation in 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} QTR of FY 2017
  • MVI promotes ‘validated’ dates of death to the MVI Primary View
  • Death dates promoted to Primary View are pushed to consuming systems (VHA, VBA, etc.)
  • Rules for promoting a date of death
    • Date passes rules it is considered ‘Validated’
• New sources for Primary View dates of death
  • NCA (current source)
  • SSA Death Master File (Weekly and Full)
  • Department of Defense
  • VBA Corporate Database
  • VHA Medical Centers and Enrollment
Session Topics

• Data sources for Veteran vital status ascertainment

• VHA Vital Status Files

• Date of death project

• **Data sources for Veteran and Non-Veteran mortality**

• Other resources for mortality data

• Examples of using mortality data for research
National Death Index

• Gold standard for death ascertainment

• Available from the National Center for Health Statistics
  • Source of data: State Vital Statistics Offices
  • Records from 1979 through 2013 (~12 month lag)

• Contains cause of death from death certificates

• Information about fees & access
  • http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/ndi.htm

• Suicide Data Repository from the VHA Office of Public Health
National Death Index for Veterans

CDC’s National Death Index Plus which contains approximately 2.5 million records (1979-2011)

- Date and cause of death (ICD-10 codes)
- Veteran decedents only, all causes of death
- Current mortality archive:
  - Service members who separated from active duty service (including deactivation NG & Reserve) between 1979-2011.
  - All users of VHA services, FY2000-2011
  - Please see http://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/Cause-of-Death/Overview.htm

VHA Users
2000

Service members separating after January 1, 1974
1979 2011
National Death Index for Veterans

• Is available through Suicide Data Repository (SDR) which is administered jointly between VA Office of Mental Health and DOD.

• All applications for access to NDI data available from SDR are reviewed by a joint VA-DoD Board of Governance, which meets quarterly (January, April, July, October) to review requests.
National Death Index for Veterans

- Contact VHACANSNDRDataRequests@va.gov for more information about accessing NDI data from the SDR.

- Data through 2014 will be available in early 2017.
SSA Epidemiological Search

- Provides date of death
- Validates SSN
- Provides ‘presumed living’ status
  - Based on SSA administrative data including:
    - Payroll deductions, railroad retirement or disability payments, death claims filed by beneficiaries
    - Advantage: Reduces loss to follow up
- Deaths occurring outside the US
- Fees & Access
  - [http://www.ssa.gov/policy/about/epidemiology.html](http://www.ssa.gov/policy/about/epidemiology.html)
State Death Certificates

• States’ policies regarding the release of death certificates vary considerably, as deceased individuals are not human subjects.

• An informal review of state vital statistics offices websites revealed that 24 mentioned a process for obtaining death records.
State Death Certificates (Advantages and Disadvantages)

- Veteran status is reported on the death certificate.
- The whole death record, including contributing causes and not just underlying cause, is available.
- With identifiers can be linked to VA data.
- Limited in scope—not all states allow release of records for research.
- Death record is the official record but concerns about accuracy of information remain.
Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)

• Contains files that report casualties in past and ongoing conflicts.

• These publicly available files contain the actual names, rank, pay grade, unit, and place of death.

• This reporting is part of the Defense Casualty Analysis System (DCAS).
Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) (cont.)

• For more information:

• These files have been used for research purposes, e.g. The association of state per capita income and military service deaths in the Vietnam and Iraq wars. *Population Health Metrics* 2009; 9:2.
Session Topics

• Data sources for Veteran vital status ascertainment

• VHA Vital Status Files

• Date of death project

• Data sources for Veteran and Non-Veteran mortality

• Other resources for mortality data

• Examples of using mortality data for research
CDC National Center for Health Statistics

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) also has a number of death search tools as well as limited individual death files.
- Examples include CDC Wonder underlying cause of death search tool
  - [http://wonder.cdc.gov](http://wonder.cdc.gov)
- Individual level multiple cause of death files are also available
  - [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data_access/VitalStatsOnline.htm#Mortality_Multiple](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data_access/VitalStatsOnline.htm#Mortality_Multiple)
CDC Injury Prevention & Control: Data & Statistics

- Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS)
- These databases have limited information due to privacy concerns, but have research applications.
- Essentially these files are de-identified.
Benefits of Additional Mortality Information

- Findings derived from information on VHA Veterans alone are unlikely to be broadly generalizable to all Veterans
  - 70% of the 22 million living U.S. Veterans in 2012 not enrolled/using VHA service
- Relative to the Vital Status File, additional data sources allow VA researchers to:
  - Study the whole/general Veteran population
  - Compare Veterans who use VHA services prior to death to those who do not
  - Compare Veteran and non-Veteran by cause of death
Session Topics

- Data sources for Veteran vital status ascertainment
- VHA Vital Status Files
- Date of death project
- Data sources for Veteran and Non-Veteran mortality
- Other resources for mortality data
- Examples of using mortality data for research
Mental Health (Vital Status File)

- Used vital status file to assess 1 year mortality after PACT implementation.
- Veterans with substance use disorders had higher risk of mortality, whereas those with PTSD had lower risk.
- Integrating primary care and mental health treatment was associated with lower risk of death for individuals with anxiety, depression, and substance use disorders
Research Example 2: Mental Health (NDI cause of death)

- New ongoing study to examine cause of death in veterans with mental health conditions
- Examines underlying cause of death from the NDI Plus which will soon include deaths through 2014
- Compare leading cause of death according to type of mental health condition (e.g. major depression, PTSD, SUD, anxiety, and serious mental illness)
Research Example 3: State Death Certificates

- Washington State offers death records for purchase.
- Files of decedent names and the death records themselves are available from 1968 to current with each file costing $20 per year.
Research Example 3: State Death Certificates


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Update schedule</th>
<th>Included in VHA VSF?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIRLS Death File</td>
<td>Veterans known to VA</td>
<td>Monthly (complete overlay)</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA/CMS Medicare Vital Status File</td>
<td>Veterans enrolled in Medicare (&gt;=65 years old or disabled)</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA Death Master File</td>
<td>Individuals with SSN (first issued 1936); Includes deaths occurring outside United States; More complete for over 65 population and for beneficiaries</td>
<td>Weekly (and VA receives annual overlay)</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Treatment File</td>
<td>Inpatient deaths (VA hospitals, Non-VA when covered by VA</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Data Warehouse</td>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Death Index</td>
<td>Veterans and non-veterans</td>
<td>Search engine, lags 1 year</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA Epidemiological Search</td>
<td>Social Security recipients and applicants</td>
<td>Search engine</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State death records</td>
<td>Veterans and non-veterans</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
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</table>
References


Contact information

VA Information Resource Center
Hines VA Hospital
virec@va.gov
708-202-2413

Chuck Maynard
cmaynard@uw.edu
Additional Resources
Resources

VHA Data Quality

• http://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/DataQuality/Overview.htm

National Data Systems

• Dorothea Garrett (Dorothea.Garrett@va.gov)

• VIReC Mortality Data page
  http://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/Mortality/Overview.htm

• VIReC Accuracy and Completeness of Death Dates page -
Resources (cont.)

**VHA Data Portal**

- [http://vaww.vhadaportal.med.va.gov/Home.aspx](http://vaww.vhadaportal.med.va.gov/Home.aspx) (Intranet only)
  - Integrates information from multiple sources into a single location to promote a comprehensive knowledge base

**HSRData Listserv**

- Join at the VIReC Web site
- Discussion among data stewards, managers, and users
- Past messages in archive (on VA intranet)
### Quick links for VA data resources

**Quick Guide: Resources for Using VA Data**

**VIReC:** http://vaww.virec.research.va.gov/Index.htm (VA Intranet)

**VIReC Cyberseminars:** http://www.virec.research.va.gov/Resources/Cyberseminars.asp

**VHA Data Portal:** http://vaww.vhadataportal.med.va.gov/Home.aspx (VA Intranet)

**VINCI:** http://vaww.vinci.med.va.gov/vincicentral/ (VA Intranet)

**Health Economics Resource Center (HERC):** http://vaww.herc.research.va.gov (VA Intranet)

**CDW:** https://vaww.cdw.va.gov/Pages/CDWHome.aspx (VA Intranet)

**Archived cyberseminar: What can the HSR&D Resource Centers do for you?**
VIReC Options for Specific Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HSRData Listserv</th>
<th>HelpDesk</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Community knowledge sharing</td>
<td>• Individualized support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ~1,200 VA data users</td>
<td><img src="virec@va.gov" alt="virec@va.gov" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Researchers, operations, data stewards, managers</td>
<td>(708) 202-2413</td>
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</table>
Next session:
April 3, 1 pm Eastern

Database & Methods Cyberseminar Series

Assessing Race & Ethnicity

Maria K. Mor, PhD
Co-Director of the Biostatistics, Informatics, and Computing Core VA Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion (CHERP)
Pittsburgh, PA