

SUICIDE IN THE US ARMY

T. Lineberry

Department of Psychiatry, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, USA

Introduction: Suicide rates in the United States Army have steadily risen over the past eight years to record levels and continue to rise. The suicide rate now is greater than the general US population even after controlling for sex and age. This change is even more concerning based on the previous steady decreased rate compared to the US general population in the thirty years prior to 2004. In 2012, suicide deaths have outpaced combat deaths year to date.

Objectives: 1. Using epidemiologic surveillance data and new scientific data, describe factors associated with the increase in suicide deaths and potential targets for interventions.

Aims: Provide overview of factors associated with suicide in military populations and effects of combat on suicide rates.

Methods: Information provided will be based on current published and ongoing research synthesizing the larger suicide research literature.

Results: Suicide in the Army has steadily increased since 2004 along with other surrogate markers of increased psychiatric illness including post deployment surveillance, anonymous surveillance, clinical utilization rates and rates of drug misuse and abuse.

Conclusions: Integrating media and scientific reports on the increased rates of military suicide is challenging. However, clinically relevant targets to impact rates along with strategies to research factors associated with suicide and larger prevention efforts hold promise.