

COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH INEQUITIES

Veterans have been largely overlooked during the COVID-19 pandemic (Chuang et al., 2022).



Health Outcomes – Although there is an increasing number of studies reporting the psychological impact of COVID-19 on the general population and healthcare workers, relatively less attention has been paid to Veterans (Li et al., 2023). Veterans with COVID-19 not only suffered symptoms from the disease but also had a *higher risk* of further development of in-hospital complications involving multiple organs (Chuang et al., 2022). A critical issue in Veterans with COVID-19 was the *increase* in mental illnesses, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), during the pandemic (Chuang et al., 2022).



Social Determinants of Health – Based on these findings, the necessity for adopting an adequate strategy to tackle mental illness among Veterans should not be underestimated (Chuang et al., 2022). Apart from the physical and mental conditions that put Veterans at risk, financial issues, limited access to medical resources, and lack of information on COVID-19 prevention are also important factors that resulted in Veterans' *greater vulnerability* during the pandemic (Chuang et al., 2022). Public health interventions need to focus on environmental and social factors that contribute to Veterans' resilience to COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.



Public Health Interventions – The main risk factors of negative consequences included pandemic-related stress, poor family relationships, lack of social support, financial problems, and preexisting mental disorders (Li et al., 2023). In contrast, higher household income and greater community interaction and support appeared to be resilience factors (Li et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic has increased adverse mental health consequences among Veterans (Li et al., 2023). Tackling mental health issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic among Veterans should be a *priority* (Li et al., 2023).



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*"Never was so much owed by so many to
so few."*

– Winston Churchill