

Chronic multisymptom illness complex in Gulf War I veterans 10 years later.

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Prior research has demonstrated that shortly after the 1991 Gulf War (Gulf War I), chronic multisymptom illness (CMI) was more common among deployed veterans than among nondeployed veterans. The aims of the current study were to determine the prevalence of CMI among deployed and nondeployed veterans 10 years after Gulf War I, compare the distribution of comorbid conditions, and identify prewar factors associated with CMI. Cross-sectional data collected from 1,061 deployed veterans and 1,128 nondeployed veterans examined between 1999 and 2001 were analyzed. CMI prevalence was 28.9% among deployed veterans and 15.8% among nondeployed veterans (odds ratio = 2.16, 95% confidence interval: 1.61, 2.90). Deployed and nondeployed veterans with CMI had similarly poorer quality-of-life measures and higher prevalences of symptom-based medical conditions, metabolic syndrome, and psychiatric disorders. Diagnoses of prewar anxiety disorders (not related to post-traumatic stress disorder) and depression were associated with CMI among both deployed and nondeployed veterans. Nicotine dependence and

veteran-reported physician-diagnosed infectious mononucleosis were associated with CMI among deployed veterans, and migraine headaches and gastritis were associated with CMI among nondeployed veterans. CMI continues to be substantially more prevalent among deployed veterans than among nondeployed veterans 10 years after Gulf War I, but it manifests similarly in both groups. It is likely to be a common, persistent problem among veterans returning from the current Gulf War.

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