

More troubled vets likely

"A Flood of Troubled Soldiers Is in the Offing, Experts Predict --- The nation's hard-pressed health care system for veterans is facing a potential deluge of tens of thousands of soldiers returning from Iraq with serious mental health problems brought on by the stress and carnage of war, veterans' advocates and military doctors say."

An article appearing in the New York Times 16 Dec 2004, by Scott Shane dated 15 Dec ([full article \(http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/16/national/16stress.html?ex=1104171106&ei=1&en=823a34fef2af4bf3\)](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/16/national/16stress.html?ex=1104171106&ei=1&en=823a34fef2af4bf3)), goes on to say ---

"An Army study shows that about one in six soldiers in Iraq report symptoms of major depression, serious anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder, a proportion that some experts believe could eventually climb to one in three, the rate ultimately found in Vietnam veterans. Because about one million American troops have served so far in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to Pentagon figures, some experts predict that the number eventually requiring mental health treatment could exceed 100,000 ...

Military and Department of Veterans Affairs officials say most military personnel will survive the war without serious mental issues and note that the one million troops include many who have not participated in ground combat, including sailors on ships. By comparison with troops in Vietnam, the officials said, soldiers in Iraq get far more mental health support and are likely to return to a more understanding public.

But the duration and intensity of the war have doctors at veterans hospitals across the country worried about the coming caseload.

"We're seeing an increasing number of guys with classic post-traumatic stress symptoms," said Dr. Evan Kanter, a psychiatrist at the Puget Sound veterans hospital in Seattle. "We're all anxiously waiting for a flood that we expect is coming. And I feel stretched right now."

A September report by the Government Accountability Office found that officials at six of seven Veterans Affairs medical facilities surveyed said they "may not be able to meet" increased demand for treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder. Officers who served in Iraq say the unrelenting tension of the counterinsurgency will produce that demand... "

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