

# SLEEP

## SLEEP DISORDERS AMONG THE VETERAN COMMUNITY



HUNTERSEVEN  
FOUNDATION

### WHAT IS SLEEP DISORDER?

Sleep disorders are conditions that result in changes in the way that you sleep.

A sleep disorder can affect your overall health, safety, and quality of life. Sleep deprivation can affect your ability to drive safely and increase your risk of other health problems.

### KEY FACT

Likelihood of clinical insomnia increased by **50%** in those with mTBI.

### SLEEP DISRUPTIONS

- Endocrine Dysfunction
- Chronic Pain
- Post-Traumatic Stress
- Brain Injury history
- Restless Leg Syndrome

### MILITARY EXPOSURES

- OPTEMPO
- Chronic Stress
- Brain Injury History
- Post-Traumatic Stress
- Time zone changes

### COMMONS SLEEP DISORDERS IN THE VETERAN COMMUNITY

**Three out of four (75%) post-9/11** veterans report at least one issue with their sleep. That number increases if the veteran has suffered a brain injury and/or was diagnosed with a mental health condition (anxiety, chronic stress, Post-Traumatic Stress).

For the brain to maintain functioning at the highest level possible, it requires sleep.

A DoD study showed that **56%** of service members reported getting less sleep than required to perform their military duties.

Inadequate sleep negatively impacts the service member's military effectiveness; demonstrating reduced ability to execute complex tasks, communicate effectively, maintain vigilance, and sustain proper alertness required to carry out duties.

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THE NEUROPROTECTIVE SECRET TO  
DETOXIFYING YOUR BRAIN

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## SLEEP AND TBI

**Sleep deprivation may account for the link between TBI and depression symptoms among service members.**

- The number of TBIs an individual has suffered increased the rate of sleep disorders by 50%.
- Blast injuries are more commonly associated with insomnia and anxiety compared to blunt trauma injuries.
- Of those deployed that experienced an mTBI, 77% reported sleep disorders.

## SLEEP AND PTS

**Sleep deprivation is a core symptom of PTSD and a factor that can exacerbate PTSD daytime symptoms, such as hypervigilance and irritability.**

- Service members with insomnia prior to trauma exposure are more likely to develop PTSD following the exposure, indicating that disturbed sleep increases vulnerability to PTSD.
- Studies show that insomnia and recurrent nightmares are independently associated with a number of negative sequelae, including suicidal ideation and behavior, over and above the effects of PTSD and depression.



## Did You Know?

During sleep, neurons cease firing at their normal **“awake”** rate and allow the brain to open (approx. 60% more) to allow cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) to enter the **“relaxed brain”** and rid it of its toxins, specifically the amyloid-beta and tau proteins.

This makes sleep an important and necessary regenerative process, especially if you suffer from a brain injury.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & RESOURCES

### Ways to improve sleep:

- Set a schedule: Sleep/wake at the same time daily.
- Exercise 20-30 min/day.
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine after 4pm.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Create a room for sleep:
  - No cell phones/TV or blue light
  - Cool room, ideal temp. 60-65 degrees
- Below are cell phone applications that assist with sleep:



## ARTICLES

- *What's Really Keeping You Up At Night?* - Havok Journal, December 10, 2020
- *The Complete Guide to Optimal Health* - Havok Journal, March 3, 2021

## PODCASTS

- **Joe Rogan Experience** - #1109: Matthew Walker, "Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams"
- **Groundtruth Podcast** - #4: Delta Operator Chris VanSant, Mastering Sleep