Veterans in the Maricopa County Arrestee Population: Prevalence, Problems and Implications

Michael D. White, Ph.D.
Background

- Prevalence of mental health problems among returning Veterans (Iraq and Afghanistan)
  - 1 in 8 suffers from PTSD (AP, 2004)
  - 15-20% of frontline infantry experienced traumatic brain injury (TBI; Hoge et al. 2008)
- The # of returning veterans to Maricopa County is likely to increase dramatically in the next 2 yrs
The Problem

- Links between these issues, substance abuse and other forms of anti-social behavior unknown

- Well-established literature on how mentally ill find themselves in the CJ system

- The movement to create Veterans Courts
  - Applying drug court model to special problem of veterans in the CJ system
  - Buffalo (NY) and a handful of others
  - The Maricopa County Exploratory Committee
Using the AARIN Platform

- Little available data on veterans to inform the work of the Exploratory Committee

- The Veterans Addendum
  - Series of questions on military service and service-related problems (post-discharge)
  - First Quarter 2009: 617 completed AARIN interviews
Preliminary Findings: Veterans Addendum
Percent of Respondents Who are Veterans (n=617)
Selected Demographics Comparing Veteran and Non-Veteran Arrestees

- Male
- Caucasian
- African American
- Hispanic
- Did not Graduate H.S.
- High School Diploma
- Post High School

Chart showing comparisons between Veteran and Non-Veteran arrestees on various demographics.
Most Serious Type of Offense at Arrest

Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety
Length of Service (n=43)
Time Since Discharge (n=43)
Physical Injuries, PTSD, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Problems

- Physically Injured
- PTSD
- Mental Health Problem
- Substance Abuse

Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety
Violent Victimization in Past 12 Months

- Gun Crime
- Non-Gun Weapons Crime
- Assaulted or Attacked
- Robbed

[Bar chart showing the comparison between Non-Veteran and Veteran for different types of violent victimization.]
Marijuana Use and Urinalysis by Veteran Status

Past 12 Months
Past 30 Days
Urinalysis

Non-Veteran
Veteran
Powder Cocaine Use and Urinalysis by Veteran Status

- Past 12 Months
- Past 30 Days
- Urinalysis

Legend:
- Non-Veteran
- Veteran

Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety
Crack Cocaine Use and Urinalysis by Veteran Status

Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety
Methamphetamine Use and Urinalysis by Veteran Status

Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety
Conclusions & Next Steps

Conclusions:
- Veterans – 7% of arrestees
- Many suffering from service-related problems (56%)

Next Steps
- Continue data collection
  - Currently collecting 2nd quarter data
- Working with VA: 2010-11 returning veterans from Iraq/Afghanistan
Michael D. White, Ph.D.

www.west.asu.edu/cvpcs/

(602) 543-6622

mdwhite1@asu.edu