

The Case for Large Numbers; A Review of the Rand Report: Invisible Wounds of War - Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, Their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery
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In April 2008, the Rand Corporation released its report concerning the invisible wounds of service members returning from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The study sought to determine prevalence rates, the projected costs involved and issues relevant to the system of care available to returning personnel with psychiatric conditions linked to combat experiences. The study reported that since October 2001, 1.64 million military personnel have been deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. Editors T. Tanielian and L. Jaycox published the results of a field survey of 1,965 previously deployed service members and veterans who were asked to report mental health symptoms over the prior thirty days. Reviewing the Rand monograph points to the following set of large numbers. Assuming 1.64 million deployed service members, the Rand results estimate approximately 300,000 individuals with PTSD or Major Depressive Disorder, 320,000 with “probable” TBI, and 82,000 with all three conditions PTSD, Major Depressive Disorder and TBI. The results of their survey further suggest that well over 500,000 have at least one of the conditions noted above. The numbers of previously deployed individuals who have sought care for these conditions is somewhat unclear, but according to the study, close to half of these surveyed individuals had not yet sought care.

Forensic psychiatrists participate in mental health disability evaluations. The large numbers described above suggest that in the relevant future, there will be large numbers of individuals seeking disability benefits who will require comprehensive evaluation.