

Study: Mental health of the Canadian Armed Forces, 2013

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In 2013, about one in six Regular Force members of the Canadian Armed Forces (16.5%) reported symptoms consistent with at least one of five selected mental disorders in the 12 months prior to being surveyed. The five disorders measured by the Canadian Forces Mental Health Survey were: major depressive episode, post-traumatic stress disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and alcohol abuse or dependence. Depression was the most common disorder, with 8.0% of Regular Force members reporting symptoms in the 12 months before the survey.

Regular Force members who had been deployed in support of the mission in Afghanistan had higher rates of mental disorders than non-deployed members. The rates of post-traumatic stress disorder and panic disorder were twice as high among Regular Force members who had been deployed compared with their non-deployed counterparts.

In 2002 and 2013, the rate of depression among Regular Force members was about the same at 8.0%, while the rate of post-traumatic stress disorder has almost doubled from 2.8% in 2002 to 5.3% in 2013.

Regular Force members had higher rates of depression and generalized anxiety disorder than the general Canadian population, after adjusting for age and sex differences. About the same proportion of Regular Force members and the total Canadian population met the criteria for alcohol abuse or dependence in the 12 months prior to being surveyed—approximately 5%.

Note to readers

This release presents data from the 2013 Canadian Forces Mental Health Survey, featuring information about mental health status within the Canadian Forces. Information is collected from full-time regular members of the Canadian Forces regardless of their deployment history, as well as reservists only if they have been deployed in support of the mission in Afghanistan.

The survey was developed by Statistics Canada in collaboration with the Department of National Defence. About 6,700 full-time regular members of the Canadian Forces and 1,550 reservists were interviewed from April to August 2013.

This Daily presents data on full-time regular members of the Canadian Forces. Comparisons are made with the 2002 Canadian Community Health Survey – Canadian Forces, an earlier version of this survey, and the 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health, a survey that collects information about the mental health status of Canadians, excluding full-time members of the Canadian Forces.

For comparison purposes, the Canadian population was age and sex standardized to reflect the population distribution of Canadian Forces.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5084.

The article "Mental health of the Canadian Armed Forces" is now available as part of *Health at a Glance (82-624-X)* from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca).

