

# CHRONIC PAIN IN VETERANS

*Even though many Regular Force Veterans released since 1998\* are doing well in life, many report chronic pain. In fact, chronic pain is much more prevalent in these Veterans than in the general population, and has significant well-being impacts.*

## Chronic Pain in Veterans

- Chronic physical health conditions were 2-3 times more common in Veterans than in the Canadian general population
- 41% had chronic pain or discomfort, about twice the 22% rate in the Canadian general population
- 79% of those who attributed health conditions to prior military service had chronic pain
- 63% with chronic pain had diagnosed mental health conditions

### Of those with mental health conditions:

- 91% also had a chronic physical health condition
- 62% had chronic pain
- 57% had activities reduced by pain

## Well-Being Impacts of Chronic Pain in Veterans

- 54% had past-month pain interference with work
- 59% with difficult adjustment to civilian life had chronic pain
- 77% with chronic pain had life stress most days
- 62% with activity reduction had chronic pain
- Odds of having activity limitations were 11 times greater in those with chronic pain than in those without pain
- 65% with past-year suicidal ideation and 76% with past-year suicide attempts had chronic pain
- VAC disability benefits are commonly given for medical conditions associated with pain

## Veterans Who More Often Have Chronic Pain

### Demographics:

- 45-54 years of age
- Women
- 10-19 years of service
- Lower education
- Unemployed
- Non-commissioned ranks

### Women Veterans:

- Pain-related reduction in activities more often than men

### Release from Service:

- In those with chronic pain, 45% were medically released but 55% were released for other reasons, most commonly voluntary release

### Veterans in VAC Programs:

- 65% of VAC clients had chronic pain or discomfort
- Of Veterans with chronic pain, one in four were not participating in VAC programs

\*Source: Life After Service Studies (LASS). See references next page.



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