

Veterans' Views on Naturopathic Physicians in the VA

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infosurv
Innovation in Online Research

April 2015

INTRODUCTION

Licensed naturopathic physicians are not currently credentialed to work within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). There is good reason to believe that America's veterans – especially those beset by chronic illness – would benefit from treatment by naturopathic physicians. Illnesses that naturopathic doctors (NDs) are expert in treating include chronic pain, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, anxiety, and depression.

The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) sought to assess the interest of veterans in having access to naturopathic physicians. AANP contracted with Infosurv to determine the extent to which veterans would seek care from NDs if naturopathic physicians were included in the VHA system.

METHODOLOGY

Infosurv conducted an online survey of 401 individuals in the spring of 2015. The sample consisted of persons who served in a branch of the military, were honorably discharged, and visit a VHA facility for medical reasons. The survey provides an error range of +/- 4.9% at the 95% confidence level for the sample. Respondents were randomly identified from a bona fide online survey sampling panel. The survey was administered blindly, without any identification of AANP as the survey's sponsor.

SURVEY SAMPLE

Of the respondents, 80% were male and 20% female. Their average age was 40.

49 states are represented among in this sample.

Close to two-thirds (64%) of respondents rated their health as good, one-third (33%) rated their health as fair, and 3% rated their health as poor.

More than three-quarters (77%) of respondents are taking prescription drugs.

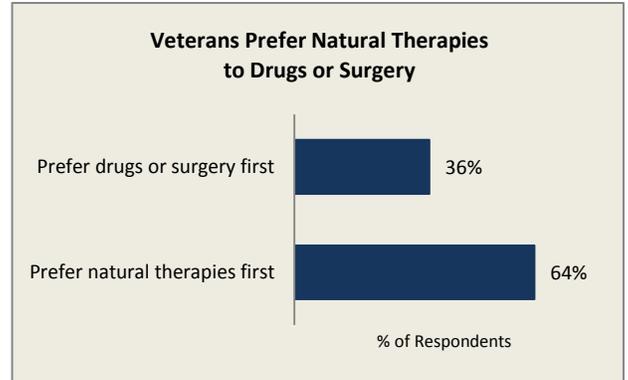
62% have visited a VA healthcare facility at least once.

Of those who have visited a VA healthcare facility, 60% live within 20 miles of that facility, 28% live within 21-50 miles of the facility, and 12% live more than 50 miles away.

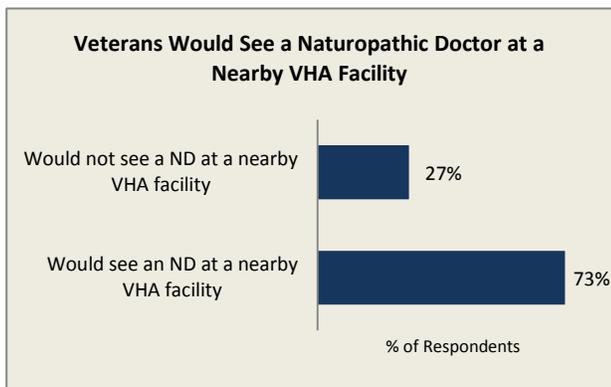
RESULTS

Veterans Prefer Natural Therapies over Drugs or Surgery

Nearly two-thirds of veterans (64%) would prefer to see a doctor who prescribes natural therapies before considering drugs or surgery. This finding is not surprising as patients generally can be expected to express reluctance to rely on drugs or surgery as the first avenue to address their health challenges.



Most Veterans Would Consider Seeing a Naturopathic Physician

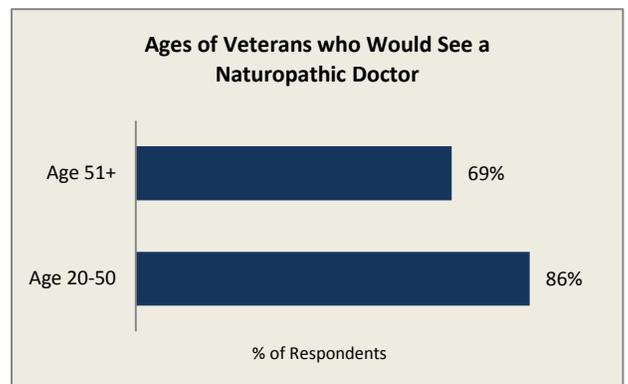


Nearly three-quarters of veterans (73%) would consider seeing a naturopathic physician if that professional were on staff at a nearby VA facility. This finding appears to reflect veterans' interest in doctors who emphasize noninvasive, natural therapies, and who spend more time with their patients than conventional doctors.

Younger Veterans Are More Likely to Want to See a Naturopathic Physician

Younger veterans (50 years of age and below) are the most likely to say they would consider seeing a naturopathic physician. This is significant because younger veterans, demographically, are the future 'stakeholders' of the VA. The trend is stronger the younger the veterans surveyed.

Additionally, the survey found that 12% of respondents are located more than 50 miles from a VHA medical facility. These veterans would undoubtedly benefit from being able to visit a naturopathic physician in private practice located closer to where they live.



ABOUT NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

According to the AANP, naturopathic medicine is a distinct primary health care profession, emphasizing prevention, treatment, and optimal health. Naturopathic physicians use therapeutic methods and substances that encourage the individual's inherent self-healing process. Naturopathic practice includes such diagnostic and therapeutic modalities as: clinical and laboratory diagnostic testing; nutritional medicine; botanical medicine; naturopathic manipulative therapy; immunizations; patient counseling; minor surgery; homeopathy; acupuncture; prescription medication; intravenous and injection therapy; and naturopathic obstetrics (natural childbirth).

Licensed naturopathic physicians attend four-year, naturopathic medical schools that derive their accreditation from the U.S. Department of Education. They are educated in the same basic sciences as MDs. They also study holistic and nontoxic approaches to preventing disease, optimizing wellness, and treating disease. To become licensed, a naturopathic physician must take a rigorous professional licensing exam. Naturopathic physicians are currently licensed in 20 States and Territories.

ABOUT INFOSURV

Founded in 1998, Infosurv is a leading market research firm with offices in Atlanta, GA and Denver, CO. Infosurv is committed to delivering insightful survey research to our clients. Infosurv has now served over 350 unique clients ranging from Fortune 50 companies to small non-profits.

Infosurv takes great care in protecting the confidentiality of online respondents, adhering to the strict survey standards of the Council of American Survey Research Associations (<http://www.casro.org/?page=thecasrocode>). Using a unique Personal Access Code (PAC) system, Infosurv can virtually guarantee against duplicate or unauthorized responses, while maintaining 100% respondent anonymity. Infosurv assigns a PAC to each online respondent, and the PAC is embedded in the survey link e-mailed to the respondent.

For more information, please visit www.infosurv.com.