

# Veteran Perceptions/Attitudes of the VA and Treatment Seeking Intentions

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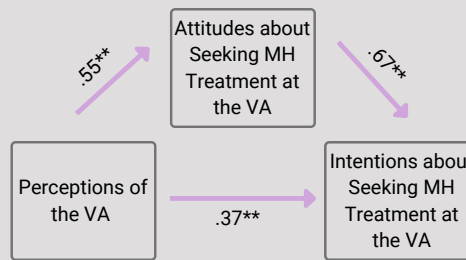
## Introduction

- Within the veteran population there is a discrepancy between the number of veterans with mental health diagnoses and those seeking mental health treatment
- Research has indicated that there are several different barriers to mental health treatment among veterans (i.e. warrior mentality, stigma, & negative views of mental health providers).
- Over the years there have been stories in the media about poor treatment of veterans at VA facilities and research has demonstrated that these stories and hearsay impacted VA usage.

## Rationale and Aims

- We hypothesized that veterans' higher levels of positive perceptions of the VA would be associated with higher self-reported intentions to seek mental health treatment at the VA.
- Additionally, it was hypothesized that the relationship between perceptions and intentions to seek mental health treatment at the VA would be mediated by the veterans' self-reported attitudes about seeking mental health treatment at the VA.

## Mediational Model



\*\*p< .001

\* Mediational model of attitudes associated with intentions based on the Theory of Planned Behavior by Ajzen (1991).

## Methodology

- 96 U.S. veterans as defined by the title 38 code of federal regulations, "a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable"
- Online survey consisting of demographics, perceptions of the VA questionnaire (Vogt et al., 2006; Fox et al., 2015), the Mental Help Seeking Attitudes Scale (MHSAS) (Hammer et al., 2018), and the Mental Help Seeking Intention Scale (MHSIS) (Hammer et al., 2018)
- Series of regression analyses to test the mediation model

## Results and Discussion

- There was a positive relationship between perceptions of the VA and intentions to seek mental health treatment at the VA and this relationship was mediated by attitudes about seeking mental health treatment at the VA.
- This means that, the more positive veterans' perceptions of the VA were the more positive their attitudes were about seeking mental health treatment at the VA and they subsequently reported higher intentions to seek mental health treatment at the VA.
- These results demonstrate the importance of the way veterans perceive mental health treatment at the VA and the VA as a whole and provides implications for monitoring press and quality of care within VA facilities.

## References

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