

TRANSLATING THE EXTENDED LIFE EXPECTANCY OF US VETERANS WITH ALS

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Background

I AM ALS is a community-led, U.S. non-profit organization that has revolutionized ALS Advocacy. Community members organize themselves into teams, such as the Veterans Team. The Veterans Team meets weekly to identify and address Veteran-specific issues, raise awareness about ALS and connect Veterans with resources to improve their quality of life through access to care, treatments, and cures.

According to Spencer, et al. (2020), a specific cohort of Veterans with ALS has greater longevity than their civilian counterparts. The Veterans Team felt that this information warranted further review.

Results

Spencer, et al. (2020) found that a cohort of Veterans with ALS's median survival rate nearly doubled the 4.7 years observed in the ALS Registry. Specifically, prolonged survival has been linked with a younger age at diagnosis, extremity onset of initial symptoms and a longer diagnostic latency after symptom onset. Participants were U.S. Veterans with a confirmed diagnosis of ALS (n=179), dichotomized into standard duration (<10 years) and long duration (>10 years).

Objective

The Veterans Team will investigate what the literature suggests about the life expectancy of U.S. Veterans with ALS as compared to that of the civilian population with ALS.

Methods

A literature review is in progress to explore the longer life expectancy of U.S. Veterans with ALS and to identify potential practices that can be translated to the civilian population with ALS.

Discussion

Upon initial review, the need for more in depth research is evident. The commonalities attributed to increased longevity of Veterans with ALS is unique and could provide valuable insight that has potential application across all demographics.

References

Spencer KR, et al., Neuropathological Profile of Long Duration ALS in Military Veterans. Epub 2020 Aug 4.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all Veterans living with ALS for their service.



For more information about the I AM ALS Veterans Team, please scan the QR Code or visit <https://iamals.org/action/veterans-team/>