

Rural-Urban Disparities in Colorectal Cancer Screening among Military Service Members and Veterans

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MY TOPIC OF STUDY

- Colorectal cancer (CRC)
 - 16 in every 100,000¹ (rate among veterans)
 - 38.9 in every 100,000² (rate among the general population)
- Early detection of CRC is key to improved CRC outcomes
 - CRC screening options: colonoscopy, FIT, sigmoidoscopy, FOBT
 - CRC screening rate:
 - 80%³ (veterans), 64%⁴ (general population)

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IMPORTANCE OF MY TOPIC

- In the general population, research has shown that disparities exist among rural and urban dwellers in their adherence to CRC screening guidelines¹
- 24% of veterans live in rural areas of the U.S.²
 - Only 60% of rural dwelling veterans utilize the VA healthcare system,² likely because of long travel times to facilities³
- Little is known about rural-urban disparities in CRC screening adherence among military veterans specifically
 - If rural veterans are less likely to be screened for CRC (as in the general population), public health programming and outreach may be needed

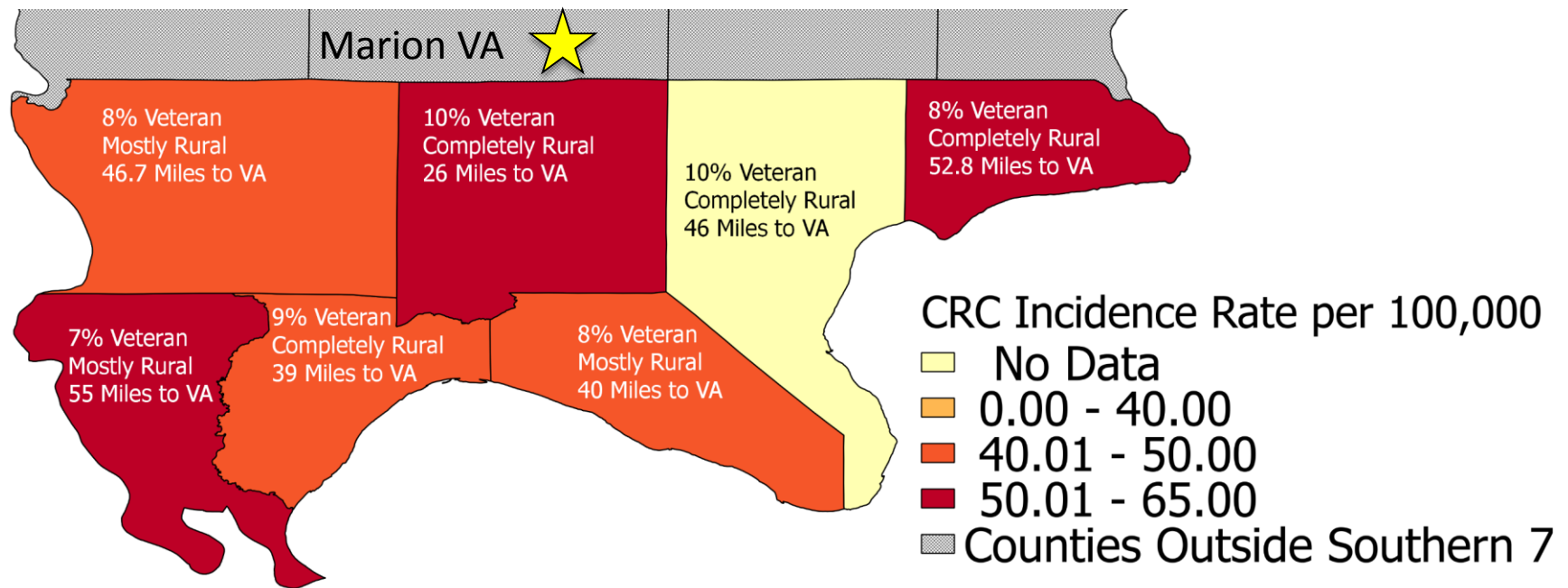
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What have I discovered?

- Nationally, while 81% of urban dwelling veterans reported having been screened for CRC, only 75% of rural dwelling veterans reported having been screened¹
- The overall CRC screening rate in Illinois for veterans is 72%
 - 5th lowest rate in the United States

1. Odds Ratio = 0.829 [95% CI = 0.763, 0.901], adjusted for gender, income, educational attainment, race, ethnicity, comorbid health conditions, health insurance coverage, marital status, employment status, and age ($n = 16,371$)

Relevance to Southern Illinois



Tools for Addressing the Disparity

- A home-based fecal immunochemical test (FIT) mailed to rural-living veterans increased CRC screening rates within six months¹
- One mobile smartphone application (mHealth app) exists for colorectal cancer prevention and detection²
 - Most veterans report ownership of a smartphone or tablet (76%) and express interest in mHealth apps (82%)³

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