The purpose of this study is to describe characteristics of Veteran wind therapy participants and identify the benefits and barriers to participation in wind therapy during the COVID pandemic.

METHOD

This study recruited 280 people who rode motorcycles as a way to manage trauma/stress via through flyers and a Facebook group for “Wind Therapy” and motorcycle riders. Participants completed a confidential cross-sectional survey on QuestionPro that included demographic questions and psychological measures. The survey link was emailed to the participants and was completed via QuestionPro. Each participant also completed the PC-PTSD (posttraumatic stress), GAD-2 (anxiety), PHQ-2 (depression) and question #9 on the PHQ-9 (suicidality), RSES-4 (resilience).

RESULTS

The sample was predominantly
- white (n=111 [84.7%]; n=135 [91.2%])
- male (n=111 [84.7%]; n=90 [60.8%])
- middle-aged (M=54.37 [12.86]; M=44.72 [12.75])
- in a relationship (n=93 [71.0%]; n=90 [60.8%])

Veterans scored significantly higher than civilians on
- anxiety ([t(275)=5.23, p < .001])
- depression ([t(275)=4.90, p < .001])
- suicidality ([t(270)=2.76, p = .006])

Veterans scored significantly lower than civilians on
- PTSD ([t(277)=5.75, p < .001])

Veterans were significantly more likely to report this benefit
- social connection (X^2 (1, 280) = 4.987, p = .026)
- veterans were significantly more likely to report this barrier
- mental health (X^2 (1, 280) = 3.911, p = .048)

Citizens were significantly more likely to report these benefits
- nature connection (X^2 (1, 280) = 3.983, p = .046)
- increased alertness (X^2 (1, 280) = 5.861, p = .015)

COVID was not a significant barrier for either group

Demographic Characteristics of Wind Therapy Participants

While many traditional mental health services were disrupted or altered in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, wind therapy remained an accessible form of social connections and self-care for Veterans. Such accessibility may convey protective factors to a population vulnerable to mental health concerns that can be exacerbated during stressors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

REFERENCES


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