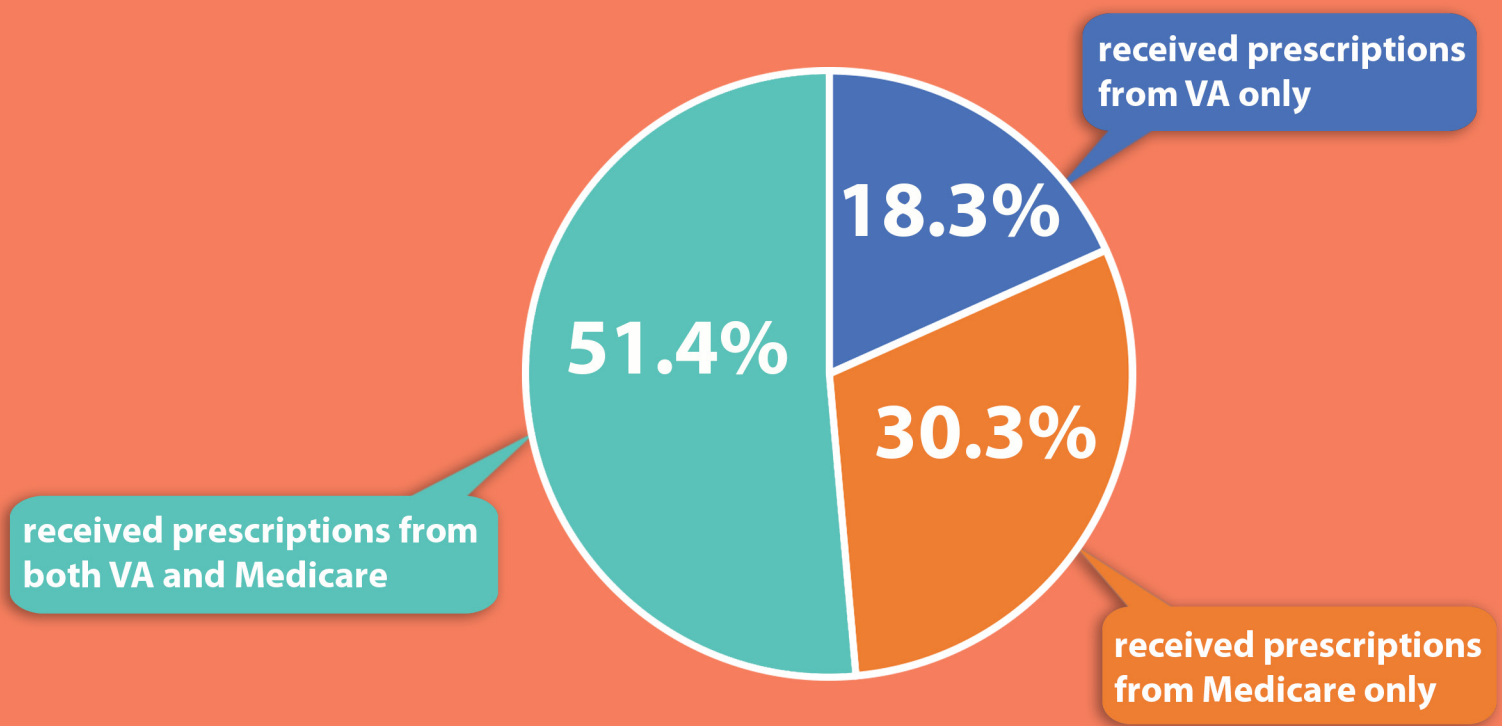


# Risks of dual pharmacy use



Researchers wanted to find out if Veterans who use both VA and Medicare drug benefits were at higher risk of receiving overlapping prescriptions for opioids (for pain) and benzodiazepenes (to ease anxiety)—a potentially dangerous drug combination.



	VA only	Medicare only	Dual use of VA and Medicare
Proportions of Veterans with potentially risky overlap:	17.3%	16.5%	<b>23.1%</b>
Proportions of Veterans with potentially risky <i>high-dose</i> overlap:	2.3%	2.9%	<b>4.7%</b>

**Conclusion:** “Among a national cohort of veterans dually enrolled in VA and Medicare, receiving prescriptions from both sources was associated with greater risk for receiving potentially unsafe overlapping prescriptions for opioids and benzodiazepines.”

Study based on analysis of records of 368,891 Veterans enrolled in VA and Medicare Part D who filled at least two opioid prescriptions in 2013. From “[Receipt of Overlapping Opioid and Benzodiazepine Prescriptions Among Veterans Dually Enrolled in Medicare Part D and the Department of Veterans Affairs: A Cross-sectional Study](#),” *Annals of Internal Medicine*, online Oct. 9, 2018. Infographic by VA Research Communications, October 2018. Photo: © iStock/Cathal Stadler.