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## BACKGROUND

- No studies describe VA patients' preferences for how to receive information from the VA during large-scale disasters
- VEMEC conducted the VA Preparedness Communications Survey (VAPCS) with VA-users who lived in the Northeast U.S. (areas impacted by Hurricane Sandy in 2012)

## OBJECTIVE

- VAPCS evaluated VA patients' communication preferences for receiving information from VA in case of natural disasters

## METHODS

- 10-15 minute survey was fielded in Aug-Nov 2015 using three-sequential mode approach (web, mail, telephone)
- Sample size: 2,264 VA-users

## CONCLUSION

- All VA patients, regardless of age, preferred **Telephone**
- Age** was most the important predictor of communication
- Younger VA-users preferred **Email** or **Text**
- Older VA-users preferred **TV** or **Radio**
- Multiple modes of communication are necessary to effectively contact all patients at the VA during large-scale emergencies

## RESULTS

### VAPCS Sample Characteristics (n=2,264):

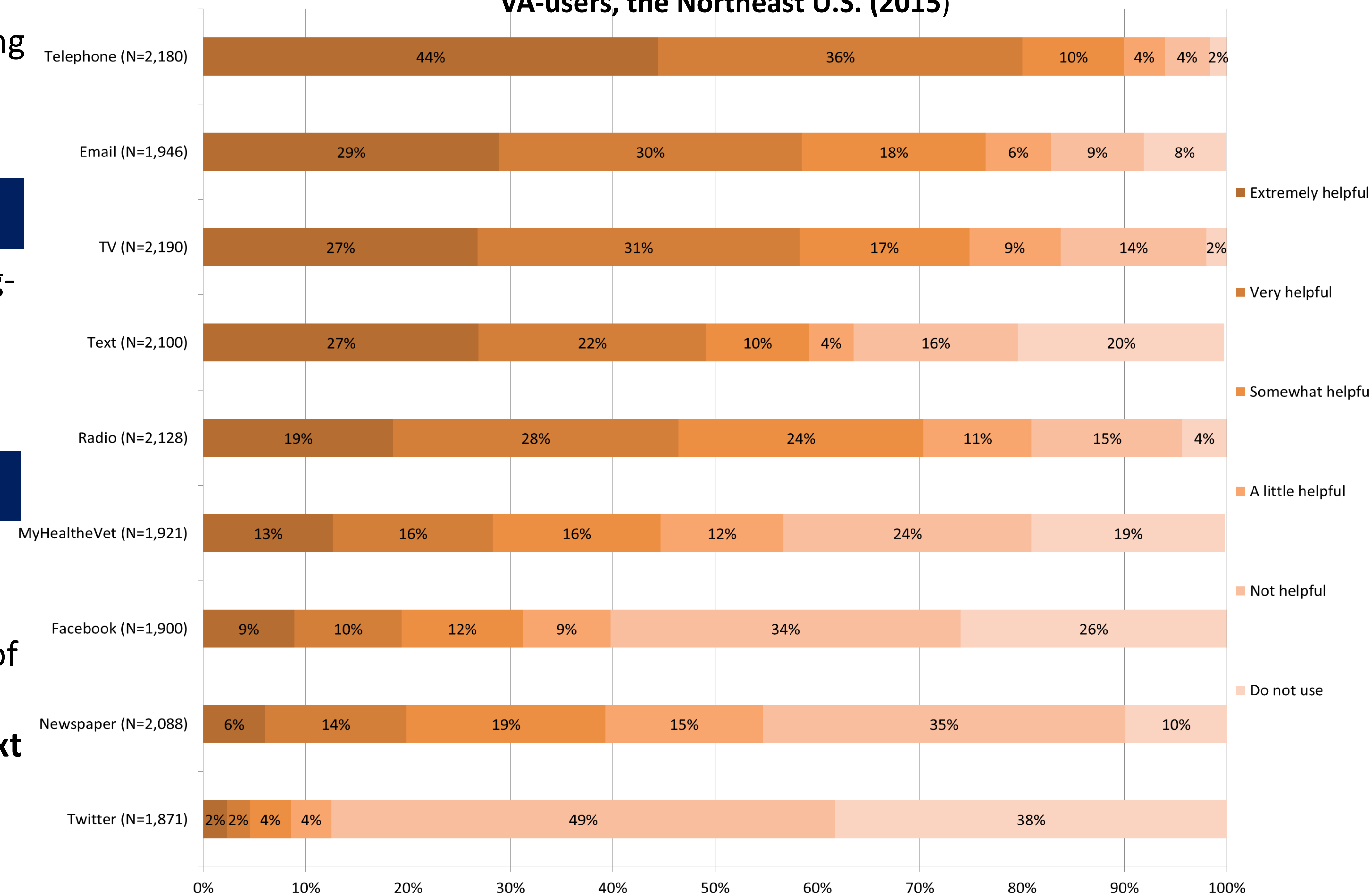
- ❖ 63.5 (mean age & 95% CI: 63.1-63.9)
- ❖ 93% male
- ❖ 77% white
- ❖ 63% married
- ❖ 38% high school or less education
- ❖ 50% retired
- ❖ 39% earned less than \$30,000 in annual income

### Methods of Communication Preference:

- ➔ Top 3 reported *helpful\** communication methods by age:
  - < 45 Telephone, Text, Email
  - 45-64 Telephone, Radio, TV
  - 65+ Telephone, TV, Radio
- ➔ Older VA-users less likely to prefer Text, MyHealthVet, Facebook or Twitter

\*VAPCS Survey Question: How helpful would you find each type of communication from the VA in the event of a natural disaster in your area? Helpful defined: "extremely helpful", "very helpful", "somewhat helpful" and "a little helpful".

Preferences of each type of communication method during natural disasters, VA-users, the Northeast U.S. (2015)



Helpful\* Methods of Communication during Natural Disasters by Age, VA-users, the Northeast U.S. (2015)

	Age group (%)**		
	< 45	45-64	65+
<b>N</b>	678	821	765
<b>TV</b>	74%	80%	80%
<b>Radio</b>	76%	81%	72%
<b>Telephone</b>	96%	92%	86%
<b>Text</b>	94%	77%	38%
<b>Newspaper</b>	34%	46%	54%
<b>Email</b>	92%	78%	56%
<b>MyHealthVet</b>	56%	58%	37%
<b>Facebook</b>	62%	39%	20%
<b>Twitter</b>	18%	14%	6%

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\*\*All p-values <0.001; p-values for comparing differences between age groups; based on chi-square tests

Notes: Missing responses to communication preference varied by age group: <45, 0-1% missing; 45-64, 8-12% missing; and 65+, 7-32% missing