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News Release

USU Researchers Lead Efforts to Prevent, Treat Brain Injuries

BETHESDA, Md. — Researchers from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) are pursuing efforts to find new ways to prevent and treat the increasing numbers of combat troops who are suffering from injuries due to traumatic brain injury (TBI). University research teams are also leading efforts to better diagnose and manage post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Of the more than 20,000 service members who have sustained injury in the war in Iraq, TBI from improvised explosive devices (IED) is the most common injury. In addition to efforts to better treat those with such injuries, the university is increasing the focus on diagnosing and treating PTSD. Currently, there is no single test to diagnose either TBI or PTSD. However, researchers at USU are studying the physical and behavioral consequences of moderate and severe TBI to characterize each injury and examine methods of identification and management. The TBI research focuses on injury caused by blasts of air following an explosion and attempts to promote recovery by using anti-inflammatory medication and sensory stimulation to regenerate brain cells and growth of brain tissue.

USU members of the interdisciplinary research team headed by Christine Kasper, Ph.D., Graduate School of Nursing include; Denes Agoston, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Anatomy, Physiology and Genetics and COL Geoffrey Ling, M.D., Ph.D., professor of Neurology. Neil Grunberg, Ph.D., professor of Medical Clinical Psychology and Joseph P. Long, Ph.D., chief, Department of Polytrauma and Resuscitation Research, Division of Military Casualty Research, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research will collaborate on the study.

The university is also home to the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress headed by Robert J. Ursano, M.D., professor/chair, Department of Psychiatry, which educates the public on emerging traumatic stress caused by combat injuries and applies innovative approaches to care not only for troops, but also spouses and family members.

Located on the grounds of Bethesda's National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) and across from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Maryland, USU is the nation's federal school of medicine and graduate school of nursing. Students are active-duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Public Health Service, who are being educated to deal with wartime casualties, natural disasters, emerging infectious diseases, and other public health emergencies.

For more information, contact the Office of External Affairs at (301) 295-1219.