

ARMY STARRS

Army Study to Assess Risk and
Resilience in Service members

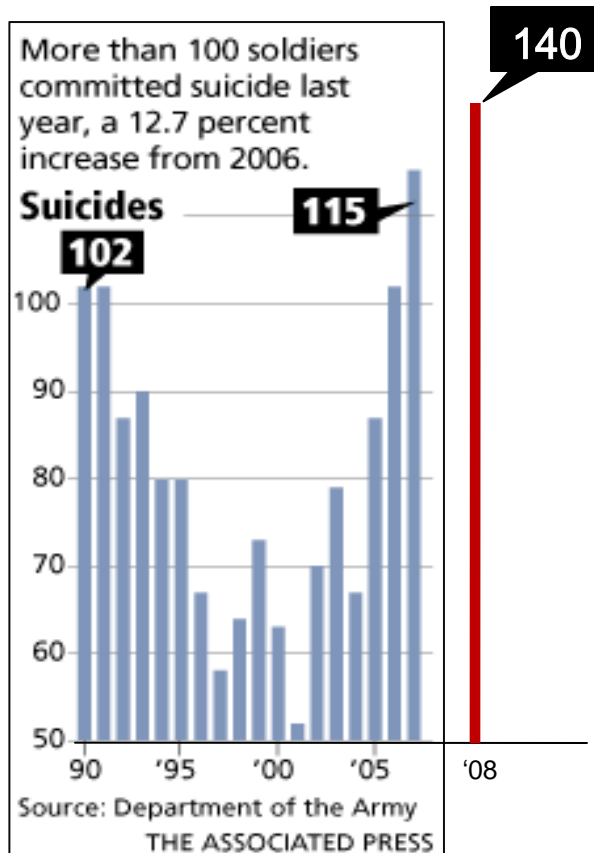
Robert K. Heintz, Ph.D., ABPP

Acting Director, Division of Services and Intervention Research

National Institute of Mental Health



Suicide Deaths in U.S. Army 1990-2008



Jelinek, P., Army suicide rates at record high. *Associated Press*, 5/30/2008

Army News Service, <http://www.army.mil/-news/2009/03/31/19022-army-vice-chief-addresses-suicide-rate-across-army/>, March 31, 2009

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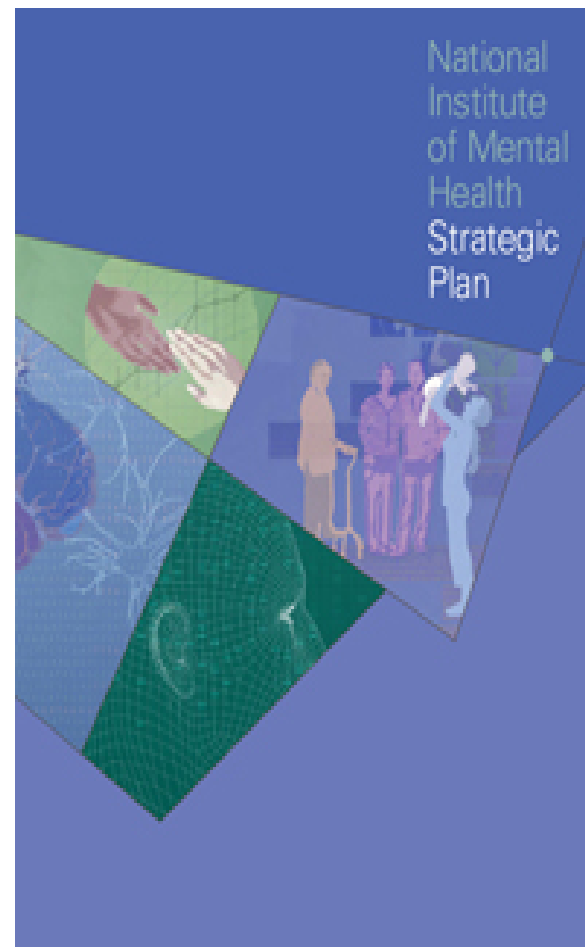
Purpose of Army STARRS

“The ultimate goal of this study is to develop data-driven methods for mitigating or preventing suicide behaviors and improving the overall mental health and behavioral functioning of Army Personnel during and after their Army service.”

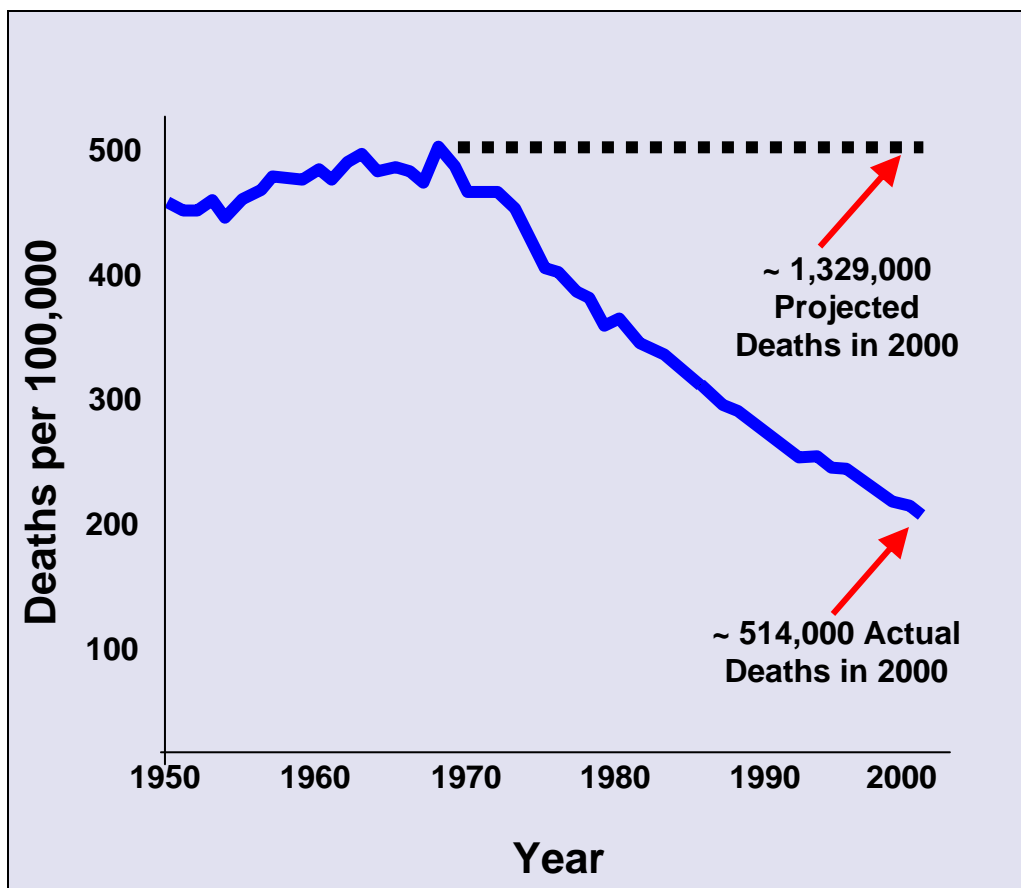
- Identify salient risk and protective factors
 - Genetic, neurobiological, cognitive features; social support, training experiences, cumulative stressors, triggering events
- Inform development of empirically-derived interventions
 - Target malleable risk/protective factors in intervention and prevention trials conducted in real world settings
- Deliver “actionable” findings rapidly
 - Interim data analyses, adaptive research design, iterative approach to signal detection and confirmation

Links to NIMH Strategic Plan

- *Strategic Plan Objective 1.3* – “Identify biomarkers and behavioral indicators associated with mental disorders.”
- *Strategic Plan Objective 2.3* – “Identify risk and protective factors for mental illness across the lifespan.”
- *Strategic Plan Objective 3.1* – “Develop innovative intervention designs for intervention studies.”
- *Strategic Plan Objective 4.4* – “Strengthen NIMH’s relationship with other Federal agencies that address mental health issues.”

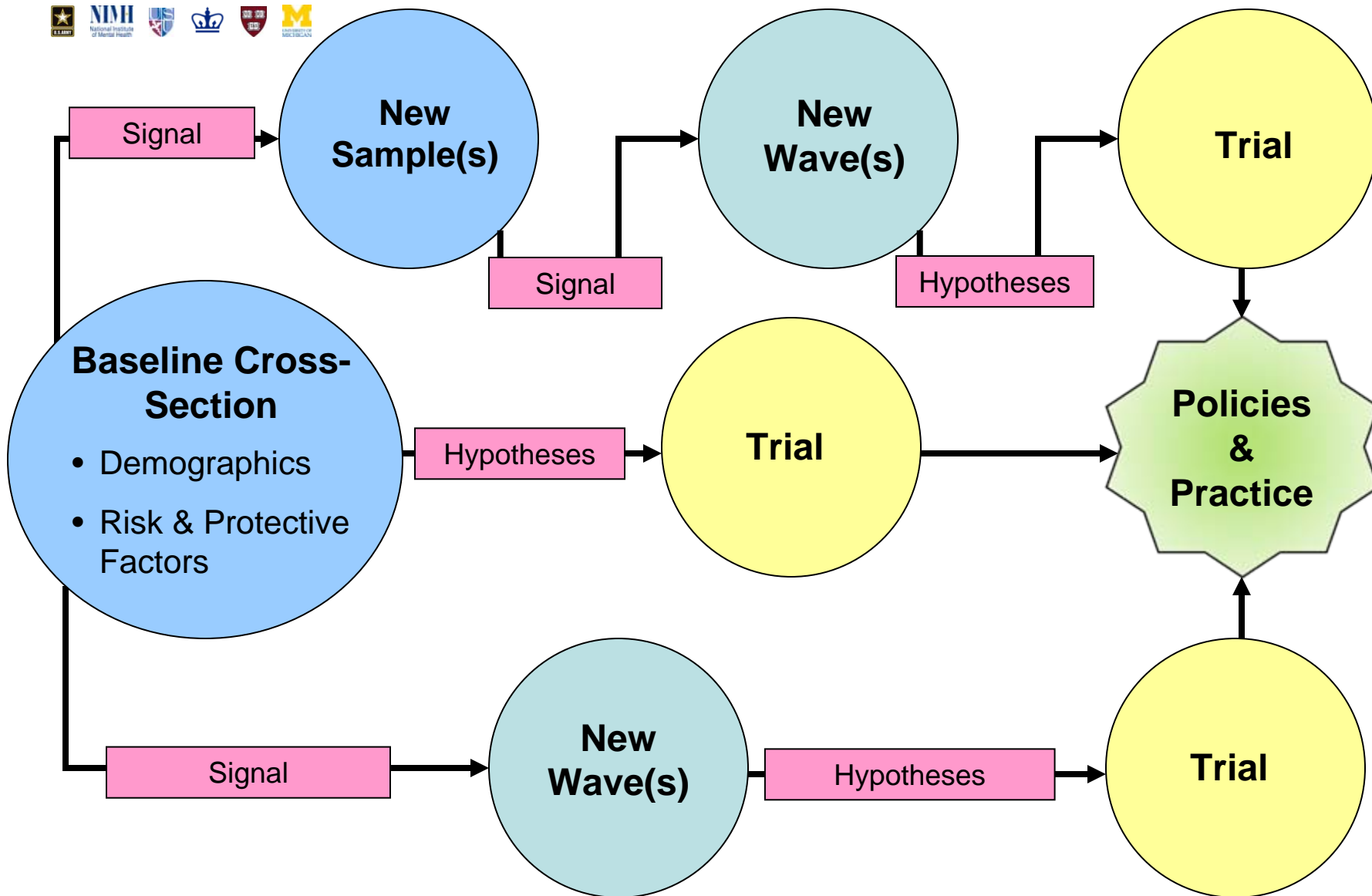


Impact of Risk and Protective Factor Research on Heart Disease Mortality



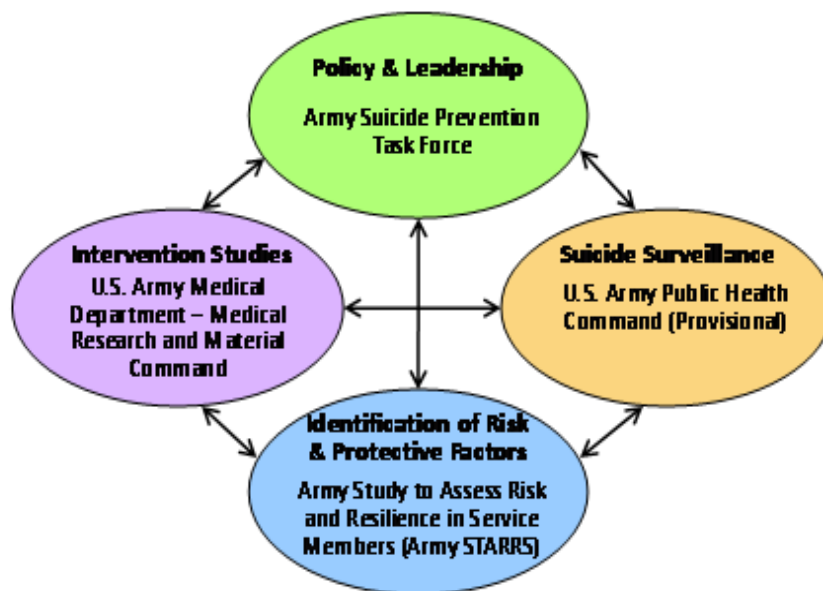
- 63% decrease in mortality
- ~ 1 million premature deaths/year averted
- \$2.6 trillion in economic return
- New, effective treatments and prevention strategies





Army STARRS Overview

- Cooperative Agreement Research Project (U01)
- \$50 million Total Costs for 5-year project period
- Equal emphasis on risk and resilience factors
- Integration and coordination of efforts with relevant U.S. Army research and public health surveillance agencies



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Army STARRS Investigators

Robert Ursano, M.D., Principal Investigator

- Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

Ronald Kessler, Ph.D.

- Harvard University

John Mann, M.D.

- Columbia University

Steven Heeringa, Ph.D.

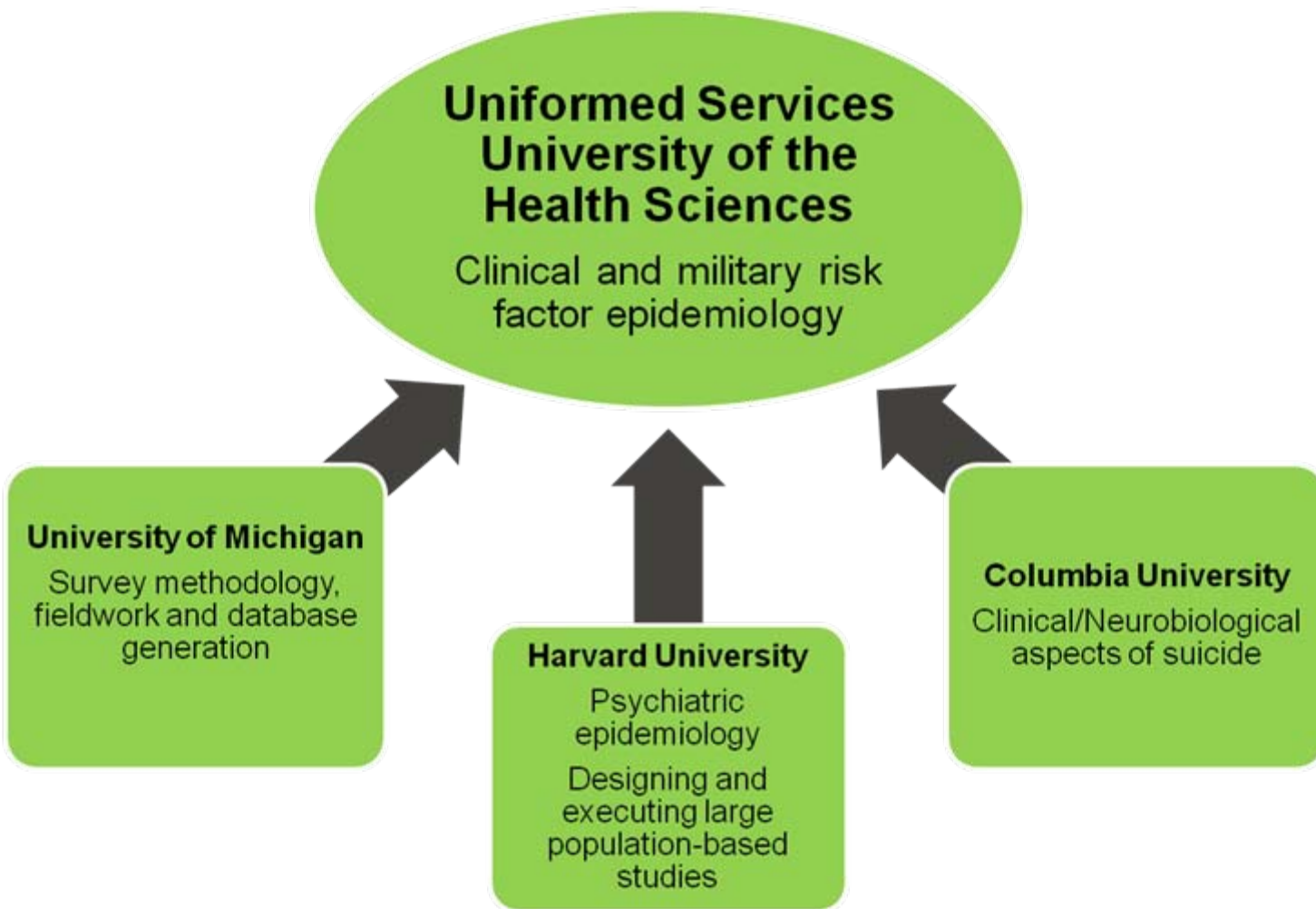
- University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

U.S. Army and NIMH Scientists

- U.S. Army Public Health Command (Provisional)
- NIMH Division of Services and Intervention Research



Consortium Expertise



Scientific Activities

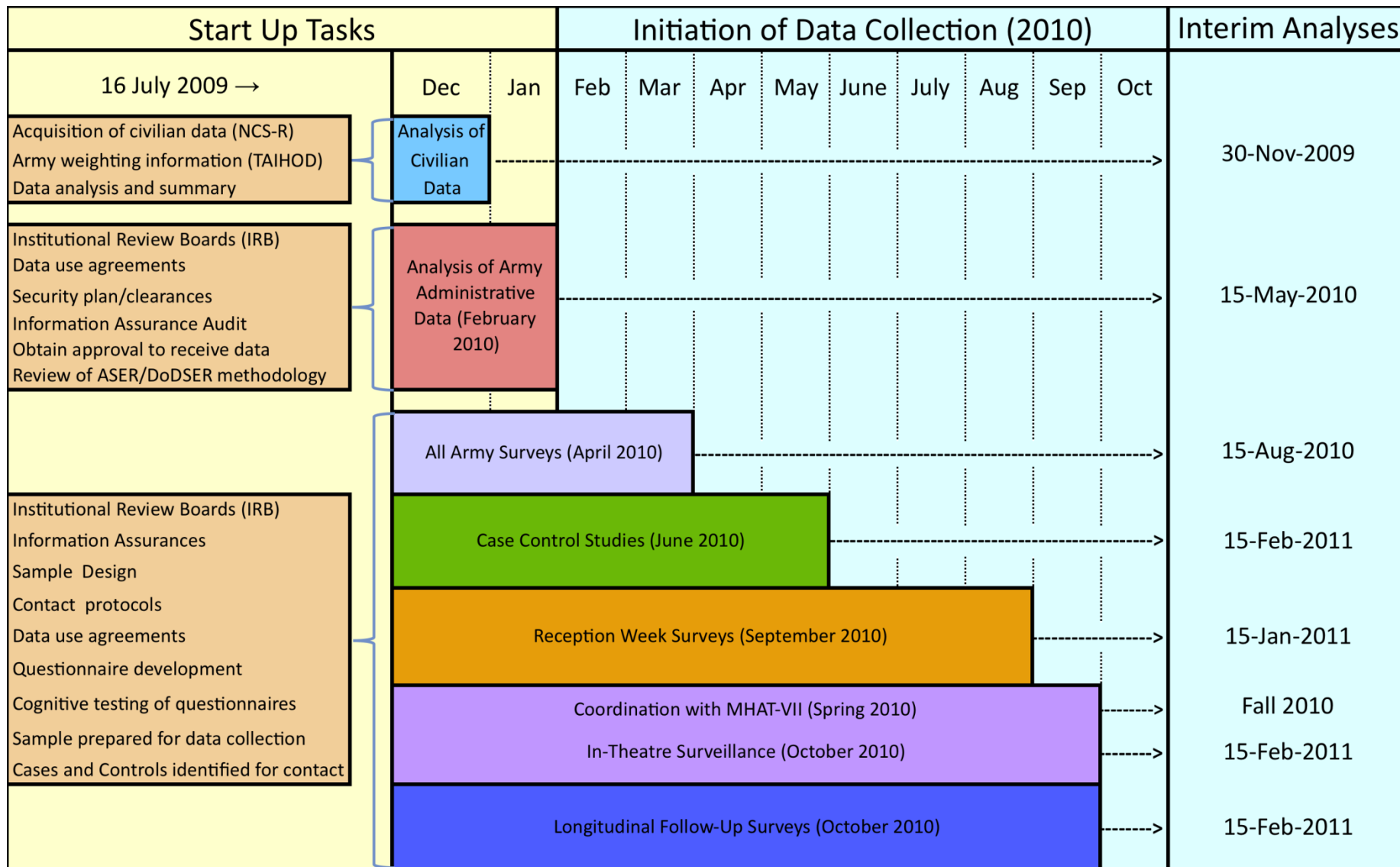
- Historical analysis of Soldiers with and without suicidal behavior since 2004 (using all data available on Active Duty Soldiers, 2004-2009)
- Representative sample of 90,000 Active Duty Soldiers, including mobilized Reserve and National Guard Soldiers, will be surveyed
- Census of new recruits in 2010, 2011, & 2012 (~80,000 – 120,000 Soldiers per year)
- Longitudinal follow-up of 15,000 Soldiers selected on the basis of particular risk/profile characteristics

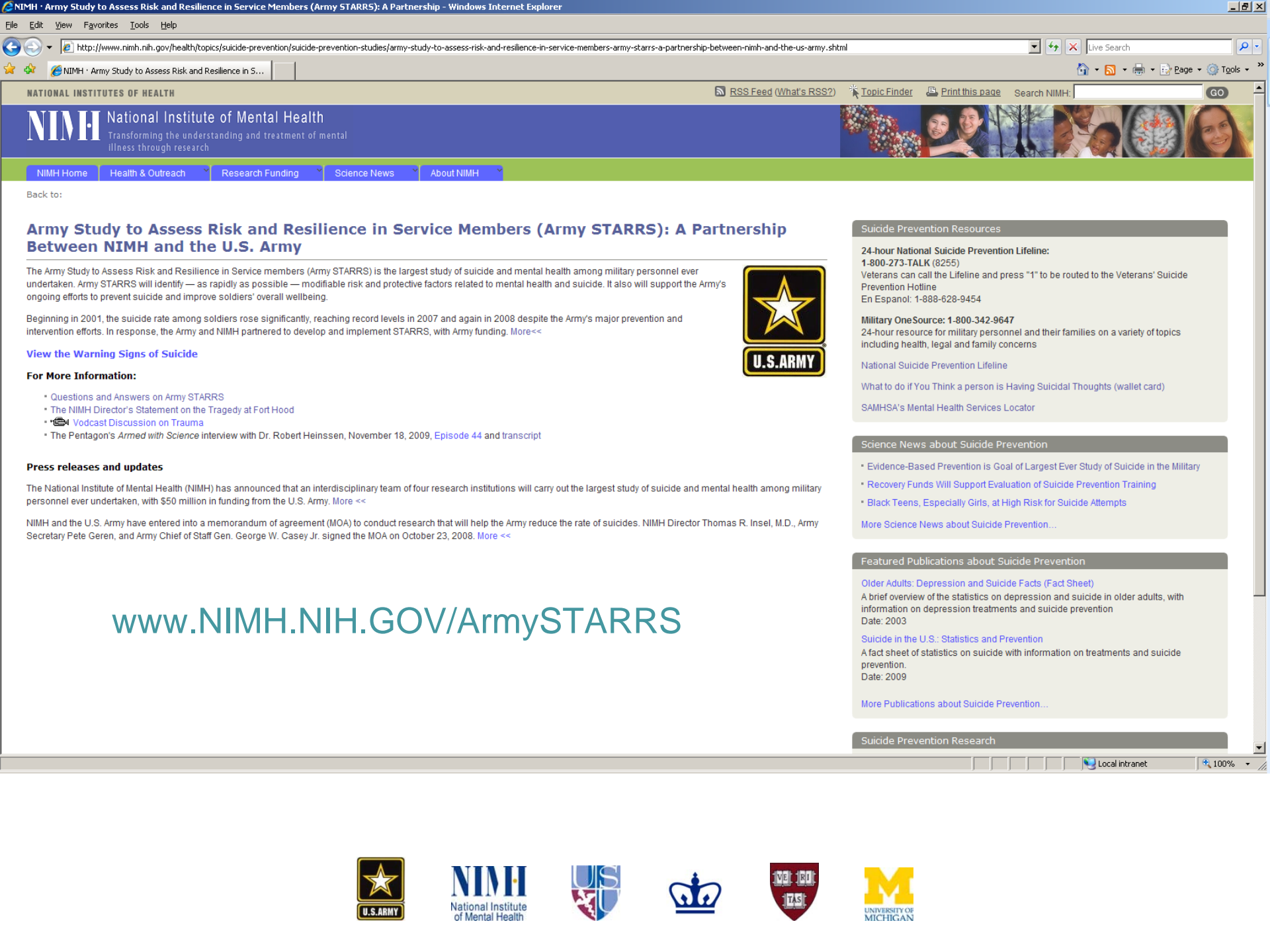
Special Features

- Feedback loop between retrospective data analysis, case control studies, and prospective surveys
- Family-member and unit leadership informants to provide additional information about social and environmental context (culture/cohesion/stress)
- Evaluation of current and future Army suicide prevention and treatment interventions
- Exploration of potential neurobiological risk and protective factors



Timeline and Deliverables





Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Service Members (Army STARRS): A Partnership Between NIMH and the U.S. Army

The Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Service members (Army STARRS) is the largest study of suicide and mental health among military personnel ever undertaken. Army STARRS will identify — as rapidly as possible — modifiable risk and protective factors related to mental health and suicide. It also will support the Army's ongoing efforts to prevent suicide and improve soldiers' overall wellbeing.

Beginning in 2001, the suicide rate among soldiers rose significantly, reaching record levels in 2007 and again in 2008 despite the Army's major prevention and intervention efforts. In response, the Army and NIMH partnered to develop and implement STARRS, with Army funding. [More <<](#)

[View the Warning Signs of Suicide](#)

For More Information:

- [Questions and Answers on Army STARRS](#)
- [The NIMH Director's Statement on the Tragedy at Fort Hood](#)
- [Podcast Discussion on Trauma](#)
- [The Pentagon's Armed with Science](#) interview with Dr. Robert Heinssen, November 18, 2009, [Episode 44](#) and transcript

Press releases and updates

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has announced that an interdisciplinary team of four research institutions will carry out the largest study of suicide and mental health among military personnel ever undertaken, with \$50 million in funding from the U.S. Army. [More <<](#)

NIMH and the U.S. Army have entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to conduct research that will help the Army reduce the rate of suicides. NIMH Director Thomas R. Insel, M.D., Army Secretary Pete Geren, and Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. signed the MOA on October 23, 2008. [More <<](#)



Suicide Prevention Resources

24-hour National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Veterans can call the Lifeline and press "1" to be routed to the Veterans' Suicide Prevention Hotline
En Espanol: 1-888-628-9454

Military OneSource: 1-800-342-9647
24-hour resource for military personnel and their families on a variety of topics including health, legal and family concerns

- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
- [What to do if You Think a person is Having Suicidal Thoughts \(wallet card\)](#)
- [SAMHSA's Mental Health Services Locator](#)

Science News about Suicide Prevention

- [Evidence-Based Prevention is Goal of Largest Ever Study of Suicide in the Military](#)
- [Recovery Funds Will Support Evaluation of Suicide Prevention Training](#)
- [Black Teens, Especially Girls, at High Risk for Suicide Attempts](#)

[More Science News about Suicide Prevention...](#)

Featured Publications about Suicide Prevention

[Older Adults: Depression and Suicide Facts \(Fact Sheet\)](#)
A brief overview of the statistics on depression and suicide in older adults, with information on depression treatments and suicide prevention
Date: 2003

[Suicide in the U.S.: Statistics and Prevention](#)
A fact sheet of statistics on suicide with information on treatments and suicide prevention.
Date: 2009

[More Publications about Suicide Prevention...](#)

Suicide Prevention Research

www.NIMH.NIH.GOV/ArmySTARRS

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Questions?

For further information:

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