



# VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health

Editors: Katherine H. Taber, PhD  
Robin A. Hurley, MD

Vol 3 (2) April 2007



## MIRECC Leadership

### Interim Director

Harold Kudler, MD  
Harold.Kudler@med.va.gov

### Co-Director - Education

Robin A. Hurley, MD  
robin.hurley@med.va.gov

### Assistant Co-Director - Education

Katherine H. Taber, PhD  
katherine.taber@med.va.gov

### Acting Co-Director - Research

Richard Weiner, MD, PhD  
Richard.Weiner@med.va.gov

### Acting Co-Director - Clinical

Kristy Straits-Troster, PhD  
Kristy.Straits-Troster2@med.va.gov

### Co-Director - Evaluation

Everett Jones, MD  
Everett.Jones@med.va.gov

### Interim Director - Special Fellowship in Advanced Psychiatry

Christine Marx, MD  
marx0001@mc.duke.edu

### Director, Special Fellowship in Advanced Psychology

Associate Director - Health Services  
Patrick Calhoun, PhD  
Patrick.Calhoun2@med.va.gov

### Associate Director - Genetics

Jean C. Beckham, PhD  
Jean.Beckham@med.va.gov

### Associate Director - Interventions

Christine Marx, MD  
marx0001@mc.duke.edu

### Associate Director - Neuroscience

Scott D. Moore, MD, PhD  
Scott.Moore2@med.va.gov

### Associate Director - Neuroimaging

Rajendra A. Morey, MD  
morey@biac.duke.edu

### Associate Director - Neurocognitive

Larry A. Tupler, PhD  
ltupler@duke.edu

## VISN 6 Leadership

### VISN 6 Director

Daniel F. Hoffmann, FACHE

### Director - Mental Health Service Line

John E. Patrick

### To Participate in Studies at Approved Research Sites Contact:

**Durham VA**  
Study Coordinator  
mireccstudies@va.gov  
919-416-5915

**Salisbury VA**  
Mary Ellena  
mary.ellena2@va.gov  
704-638-9000 ext 2956

**Hampton VA**  
Carla Williams  
carla.williams2@va.gov  
757-722-9961 ext 2999

## Update: DoD and VA Family Transition Program A Paradigm Shifting Event

The six-month follow-up meeting to the Conference on Family Assistance for OIF/OEF Veterans was held in March. (An account of the first meeting can be found in the August 2006 issue.) The purpose of the first conference was to review existing 'Best Practices' for improving veterans' care by supporting family readjustment. Staff from five VA Medical Centers (VISNs 5 and 6) participated.



They were drawn from many disciplines (including Seamless Transition Case Managers, Chaplains, Mental Health Providers, Public Affairs Officers, Voluntary Service Chiefs, and Patient Advocates). Staff from each medical center formed a planning team. Each team developed three care interventions by the end of the first meeting.

(continued on page 2)

## Community Outreach

**Dr. Jennifer Strauss** was recently interviewed by several news organizations about her innovative clinical research!



She is developing the use of guided imagery for treatment of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Her work was included in an article entitled *Treating PTSD in Non-Traditional Ways*, written by J. Arenofsky and published in the February 2007 issue of **Veterans of Foreign War Magazine**. As a result, the Herald Sun, Winston Salem Journal, and ABC 11 TV featured her research program.

**START**  
Specialized  
Transition  
Adjustment  
Reintegration  
Team



W.G. (Bill) Hefner VAMC  
Salisbury, NC

## Community Outreach

Nancy Hauck, MSW and Debra Volkmer, MSW from the Salisbury OIF/OEF START program met with the clinical staff of the University of North

Carolina – Greensboro Counseling and Testing Center on March 30th. Ms. Volkmer, Coordinator of the program and Ms. Hauck, one of the program case managers, discussed with the staff the variety of challenges that returning combat veterans are experiencing when they enter college. They were able to present information about the wide variety of services offered to our returning combat veterans by the VA medical center. The UNC-G staff recommended that the OIF/OEF Start program participate in their annual student orientation to provide additional outreach to “student/soldiers”.

For more information: Debra Volkmer, LCSW  
debra.volkmer@med.va.gov  
704-638-9000 ext 4790



## Update: DoD and VA Family Transition Program

(continued from page 1)

At the second meeting, each team presented their projects. They detailed both the implementation process and outcomes of the interventions they had developed. They also shared best practices, and explored new ways to promote veteran resiliency through family assistance.



**Dr. Harold Kudler** (MIRECC Acting Director) led the conference planning. He presented the end-of-meeting summary and discussion of each team's successes and challenges in developing new strategies to incorporate preferences of OIF/OEF veterans and their families. The process will continue with dissemination to other VISNs as well as ongoing evaluation.



(continued on page 3)

## Book Chapters

Hurley RA, Boutros N, Taber KH. *Rational Approach to Brain Imaging and Electrophysiology*. In: Coffey CE, McAllister T, Silver J (eds). *A Guide to Neuropsychiatric Therapeutics*. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins 2007: 402-428.

Roberts, M.E., Moore, S.D., & Beckham, J.C. *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Addiction*. In Mustafa al'Absi (Ed.). *Stress and Addiction: Biological and Psychological Mechanisms*. Elsevier, New York 2006: 315-332.

Taber KH, Hurley RA. *Psychosis Secondary to Inflammatory or Demyelinating Disease*. In: Fujii D, Ahmed I (eds). *The Spectrum of Psychotic Disorders: Neurobiology, Etiology & Pathogenesis*. Cambridge University Press 2007: 337-366.

## Recent Presentations

**Beckham JC, Wiley MT, Miller S, Dennis MF, Calhoun PS.** *Ad Lib Smoking in PTSD: An electronic Diary Study*. 13th Annual Meeting of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco, February 21- 24, 2007, Houston, TX.

**Calhoun PS, Straits-Troster K, Kudler H.** *Prevalence of Hazardous Alcohol Use and Risk Reduction Counseling Among OIF/OEF Veterans*. 25th Annual Meeting of the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Services Research and Development Service, February 21-23, 2007, Washington, DC.

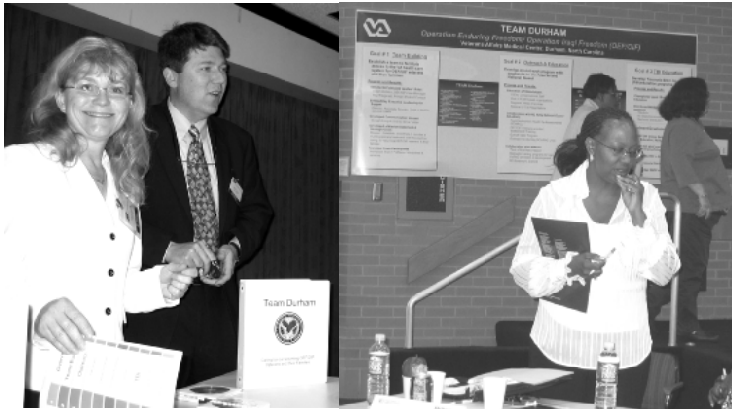
**Calhoun PS, Wiley M, Dennis MF, Beckham JC.** *Self-Report and Physician Rated Health in Women with PTSD and Depression*. 25th Annual Meeting of the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Services Research and Development Service, February 21-23, 2007, Washington, DC.

(continued on page 3)

## Update: DoD and VA Family Transition Program

(continued from page 2)

Here are a few of the successful projects that were presented:



**Durham VA** created a multidisciplinary OIF/OEF clinical care team. The team meets regularly to develop and implement joint projects. One project resulted in changing hospital policy to allow children to visit or accompany their veteran parent. Another resulted in creation of phone cards and travel cups with VA information for distribution to returning veterans at PDHRA events. (Team Durham)

A "Welcome Home Festival" is planned for June 2006. It will include attributes of a Health Fair, StandDown or WinterHaven event. The **Washington DC VA** is coordinating this festival with a DoD event, and has a host of family-friendly activities and information planned.



**Hampton VA** is piloting a "Battle Buddies" program for veterans of past wars to support new combat veterans.

**Maryland HCS** developed a "Media Kit" for Public Relations and Outreach purposes. The Kit highlights the importance of families in readjustment. It emphasizes the importance of increasing family awareness of the post-deployment adjustment process. Outreach included multiple television, radio and live presentations with dissemination of contact information and public education.

## MIRECC Clinical & Research Collaboration: New Study on Health Care

**Kristy Straits-Troster, PhD** (Acting Co Director, MIRECC Clinical) is leading a new study on health risk behaviors, quality of life and satisfaction with VA healthcare among OIF/OEF veterans. Collaborating on the study are Everett Jones, MD (Co Director, MIRECC Evaluations), Pat Calhoun, PhD (Associate Director, MIRECC Health Services Research) and John Elter PhD (VA Office of Quality and Performance). The



team is conducting a secondary analysis of the Survey of Healthcare Experiences of Patients (SHEP). This national cross-sectional patient survey data was collected by the VA Office of Quality and Performance.

Prevalence of smoking, risky alcohol use, depressed mood, and elevated body mass index was estimated using standardized clinical screening tools. Patient report of provider advice or referral for smoking cessation or substance use treatment was examined. Quality of life and satisfaction with care were determined using standard scoring criteria. The results of this and related projects will be used to guide improvements in OIF/OEF quality of care, customer service and gender-specific healthcare needs/preferences. Preliminary findings have been presented by Clinical and Health Services Research faculty at international scientific meetings and national VA meetings and workgroups and further analysis of this large database is ongoing.

## Recent Presentations

(continued from page 2)

**Hurley RA.** *Windows to the Brain: Neuropsychiatry of Traumatic Brain Injury.* Southern Regional AHEC: Uniting for Growth meeting, February 22-23, 2007, Pinehurst, NC.

**Roberts ST, Calhoun PS, Beckham JC, Troster KS, Tupler L, Marx C, Morey R.** *Resilience as a Protective Factor Against the Development of PTSD Symptoms Following Trauma Exposure in OIF/OEF Veterans.* 25th Annual Meeting of the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Services Research and Development Service, February 21-23, 2007, Washington, DC.

**Roland EJ, Strauss, JL, Butterfield MI.** *Risk factors and symptoms of PTSD in women veterans with PTSD: Is race a factor?* Center for Women's Health Research at UNC-C Eighth Annual Women's Health Research Day, April 3-4, 2007, Chapel Hill, NC.

(continued on page 4)

## Publications

Becker ME, Hertzberg MA, Moore SD, Dennis MF, Bukenya DS, Beckham JC. A Placebo-Controlled Trial of Bupropion SR in the Treatment of Chronic Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. *J Clin Psychopharmacol*. 2007 Apr;27(2):193-197.

Calhoun PS, Stechuchak KM, Strauss J, Bosworth HB, Marx CE, Butterfield MI. Interpersonal Trauma, War Zone Exposure and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder among veterans with Schizophrenia. *Schizophrenia Research* 2007 91:210-216.

Kang-Park MH, Kieffer BL, Roberts AJ, Siggins GR, Moore SD. Presynaptic  $\delta$  Opioid Receptors Regulate Ethanol Actions in Central Amygdala. *J Pharmacol Exp Ther*. 2007 320(2):917- 25.

Taber KH, Hurley RA. Neuroimaging in Schizophrenia: Misattributions and Religious Delusions. *J Neuropsychiatry Clin Neurosci* 2007 19(1): iv-4.

Wang C, Marx CE, Morrow AL, Wilson WA, Moore SD. Neurosteroid modulation of GABAergic neurotransmission in the central amygdala: A role for NMDA receptors. *Neurosci Lett* 2007 415(2):118-23.

## Invited Lectures

On February 17, **Dr Hurley** and **Dr. Taber** presented "*Neuroanatomy of the Basal Ganglia*" as part of the ANPA Education Committee workshop "Neuropsychiatry of Subcortical Disorders" and "*Neuroanatomy of the White Matter Pathways*" as part of the Society for Behavioral and Cognitive Neurology workshop "White Matter Matters". Both workshops were held in conjunction with the American Neuropsychiatric Association Annual Meeting in Tucson, AZ.

On April 11, two of our MIRECC leaders gave presentations as part of the Evolving Paradigms: Providing Health Care to Transitioning Combat Veterans conference in Las Vegas, NV. **Dr. Kudler** participated as a speaker and discussant with Laurent Lehmann, MD (Chief Consultant, Mental Health Strategic Healthcare Group, VACO) and Chaplain (Capt.) James Sizemore (Ohio National Guard) in the session "*Medical Center Programs for Returning Veterans*". **Dr. Hurley** participated as a speaker and discussant with Katherine Helmick, MS, CNRN, CRNP (Manager, Office of Clinical Standards, Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center) in the session "*Mild Traumatic Brain Injury and Mental Disorders*".

## Noon V-tel Lecture Schedule:

**May 11**

Dr. Gary Mancil (**Salisbury VAMC**)  
*Visual Disorder in TBI: A Common Complaint*

**June 8**

Debra Volkmer, LCSW (**Salisbury VA**)  
*"Overview of the Evolving Paradigms Conference: Providing Health Care to Transitioning Combat Veterans"*

**July 13**

Dr. Theodore Wright (**Salem VAMC**)  
*PREFS: Post-Deployment Readjustment Education for Families and Soldiers*

**August 10**

Dr. Jacqueline Friedman and START team (**Salisbury VAMC**)  
*Developing a Couples Workshop for OIF/OEF Veterans*

This series is presented by V-tel and audio conferences. We are having increasing participation from sites outside VISN 6. Our assigned call in numbers may change, depending upon how many sites expect to join in. For this reason, the number that each VISN 6 site will use to dial in will be included in an email notification prior to March 9.

If you wish to attend from a site outside of VISN 6, please contact Mary Ellena (mary.ellena2@va.gov; 704-638-9000 ext 2956) so she can make the necessary arrangements.

## Recent Presentations

(continued from page 3)

**Straits-Troster K, Calhoun PS, Kudler H, Jones E, Elter J.** *Gender Differences Among OIF/OEF Combat Veterans Seeking VA Healthcare*. 25th Annual Meeting of the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Services Research and Development Service, February 21-23, 2007, Washington, DC.

**Strauss JL, O'Loughlin SO, Keng SL, Stechuchak KM, Olsen MK, Zervakis JB, Elbogen E, Oddone EZ, Weinberger M, Swartz MS, Butterfield MI.** *Content analysis of psychiatric advance directives: treatment preferences expressed by veterans with severe mental illness*. Annual Department of Veterans Affairs Health Services Research and Development Service Career Development Conference, February 2007, Arlington, VA.

**Strauss JL, Lapp K, Bosworth HB, Stechuchak KM, Calhoun, PS, Bryce ER, Zervakis JB, Butterfield MI.** *Lifetime sexual and physical victimization among male veterans with combat-related PTSD*. National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence, March 16 - March 17, 2007, San Francisco, CA.

**Strauss JL, Coffman CJ, Olsen MK, Marx CE, Oddone EZ, O'Loughlin SH, Butterfield MI.** *A self-management intervention to improve outcomes of PTSD related to military sexual trauma*. National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence, March 16 - March 17, 2007, San Francisco, CA.

**Taber KH, Hurley RA.** *Functional Neuroanatomical Atlas of TBI Part 2: Applications for Neuropsychiatric Practice* 18th Annual Meeting of the American Neuropsychiatric Association, February 18-20, 2007, Tucson, AZ.