



VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health

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New Collaborative Outreach Project

Families AT EASE

Peace of mind is worth fighting for.

www.mirecc.va.gov/familiesatease/

This project is a collaborative effort with the VISN 4 MIRECC.

The "Families at Ease" is designed to enhance outreach to recently returned combat Veterans who are reluctant to seek help, or who may be unaware that they need it. The program will include brochures, advertisements, posters and other outreach methods. These are designed to encourage Veterans and families to contact a call center where they will receive more information. The objective is to educate them about health care services available and encourage them to take advantage of the benefits they have earned.



Their buddies got them through the horrors of war.
Getting through the return home is where you come in.

This is a pilot clinical project operated in the Philadelphia, PA and Durham, NC areas: Philadelphia area call 1-888-823-7458
Durham area call 1-877-823-8018

Recently Approved Grants

Marx CE Neurosteroids and other Novel Therapeutics in Schizophrenia and PTSD. VA Career Development Transition Award (CDTA)

Approved Research Sites & Contacts:

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

Hampton VA
Sarah Ingle
sarah.ingle@va.gov
717-722-9961 ext 1533

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Presentations from Our MIRECC



American College of Neuropsychopharmacology 48th Annual Meeting

Hollywood FL, December 6-10, 2009

Panel

Traumatic Brain Injury, Depression, and other Comorbidities in Military who Served in Iraq/ Afghanistan: Predicting Risk, Resilience, and Therapeutic Response"

Chaired by: Christine Marx & Rachel Yehuda

Discussant: John H. Krystal

Functional and Diffusion MRI for Characterizing Neural Features of TBI and PTSD

Rajendra A. Morey (VISN 6 MIRECC)

Biological Changes Before, During, and After Prolonged Exposure Therapy in OEF/OIF Veterans with PTSD

Rachel Yehuda

Candidate Biomarkers and Novel Therapeutic Agents for TBI, Depression, and Suicidality in OEF/OIF Veterans

Christine Marx (VISN 6 MIRECC)

PTSD and its Comorbidities: Relevance of Depression and Substance Use Disorders

Alexander Neumeister

Posters

Adjunctive Aripiprazole for PTSD in Veterans who Served in the US Military after September 11, 2001.

Naylor J, Payne V, Youssef N, Strauss J, Kilts J, Keefe R, Davidson J, Marx C

Candidate Biomarkers for Suicidality in Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Era Veterans. Youssef N, Kilts J, Naylor J, Payne V, Strauss J, Allen T, VISN 6 MIRECC Work Group, Marx C

Resources for Providers

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



HSR&D
Health Services Research
& Development Service

HSR&D » Publications » Esp

Evidence-based Synthesis Program

Determining the Efficacy of Psychotherapy for Treatment Resistant Depression

Ranak B. Trivedi, PhD

Seattle VA HSR&D Center of Excellence

Jason A. Nieuwsma, PhD

VISN 6 MIRECC Postdoctoral Fellow

John W. Williams Jr, MD, MHS

Director, Duke Evidence-Based Practice Center

Dana Baker, MS

Duke University



<http://www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/publications/esp/reports.cfm>

Publications

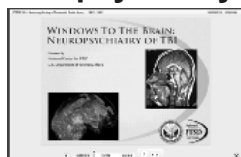
Dedert EA, Wilson SM, Calhoun PS, Moore SD, Hamlett-Berry KW, Beckham JC. *Public health clinical demonstration project for smoking cessation in veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder.* Addictive Behaviors. 2010 Jan;35(1):19-22.

Hurley RA, Flashman LA, Chow TW, Taber KH. *The Brainstem: Anatomy, Assessment and Clinical Syndromes.* Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience 2010 Winter; 22(1): iv, 1-6.

Taber KH, Hurley RA, Yudofsky SC. *Diagnosis and Treatment of Neuropsychiatric Disorders.* Annual Review of Medicine 2009. 61: 121-133.

New Web Course for Providers & Researchers

Neuropsychiatry of Traumatic Brain Injury by Dr. Robin Hurley (Associate Director, Education)



This presentation provides an examination of the neuropsychiatry of traumatic brain injury (TBI). The functional anatomy of emotion, memory, and behavior circuits are presented using graphics and figures. The author discusses types of injuries

and common functioning deficits, as well as prevalence rates of TBI in OEF/OIF veterans. A discussion of PTSD and TBI is also provided, as well as an overview of assessment and treatment. After viewing the presentation, the participant will be able to:

Describe the functional anatomy of emotion, memory, and behavior circuits

Report common functioning deficits in civilian brain injury

Describe up-to-date assessment and treatment of TBI

Providers and Researchers

PTSD 101



<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/ptsd101/course-modules/traumatic-brain-injury.asp>

New Web Course for Providers

www.ahccconnect.com/citizensoldier


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Click on **New Users** to register. Then you will see the available web courses listed:

Treating the Invisible Wounds of War: B. Traumatic Brain Injury

This course is designed to help primary care physicians, case workers, mental health providers - who may see a veteran or family member on an unrelated issue - develop a better understanding of the culture in which veterans and their families live and work, and provide best practices for identifying, assessing and treating mental health problems that result from the trauma of war. At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

- ★ Identify strategies for establishing and maintaining a therapeutic alliance with combat veterans and their families by examining military structure and culture and the combat experience
- ★ Identify functional anatomy of emotion, memory and behavior circuits
- ★ Recognize symptoms of TBI and the impact TBI has on daily life of service members and families
- ★ Identify TBI screening tools and treatment recommendations
- ★ Identify frames of mental health assessment and treatment options for military personnel
- ★ Identify how family relationships are impacted by mobilization, deployment and redeployment
- ★ Identify services available for veterans and their families, including those provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and TRICARE

Invited Lectures



Dr. Nagy Youssef (MIRECC Fellow) has been awarded the America's Top Psychiatrists 2009 Award in Mood Disorders & Suicide Prevention. This award is provided by the Consumers' Research Council of America an independent research company based in Washington, DC.

Dr. Christine Marx (Director, MIRECC Interventions Core) presented "Neurosteroids as Novel Therapeutic Agents and Candidate Biomarkers in Traumatic Brain Injury and Schizophrenia", Grand Rounds, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Duke University Medical Center, Durham NC, December 17, 2009

Dr. Jennifer Strauss (MIRECC Researcher) presented "*Imagery in the Treatment of PTSD in Female Veterans.*" at Brain, Mind and Healing: A Scientific Exploration of the Role of Mind in Healing, Samueli Institute, Alexandria, VA, January 2010.

Book Chapters

Massing MW, Robinson GA, Marx CE, Alzate O, Madison RD. *Applications of Proteomics to Nerve Regeneration Research.* In: Neuroproteomics. Alzate O, Ed. Frontiers in Neuroproteomics Series. Simon S, Nicoletis M. CRC Press, Taylor and Francis Group, Boca Raton Florida. 2010.

Strauss JL, Calhoun PS, Marx CE. *Guided Imagery as a Therapeutic Tool in PTSD.* In: Neurobiology of PTSD. Shiromani P, Keane T, LeDoux J, eds. Humana Press, Inc; Totowa, NJ. 2009.

Dr. Robin A. Hurley (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) presented "*Windows to the Brain: Neuropsychiatry of mild TBI*" in the W.G. Hefner VAMC Research Lecture, Salisbury NC, January 22, 2010. **Dr. Hurley** presented "Traumatic Brain Injury and Mental Health" at the VHA Office of Mental Health, Veterans Justice Outreach Training Conference, Dallas TX, January 27 - 28, 2010 and "*The Neuropsychiatry of Mild Brain Injury*" at the South Carolina Psychiatric Association's Annual Meeting, Charleston SC, January 31, 2010.

Outreach to VA & Community Providers



SOUTHWEST HEALTH PROFESSIONS EDUCATION CENTER, INC.

Providing Continuing Education to Licensed Professionals Since 1993

10th Annual Phoenix VA Medical Center Audiologist Conference

February 8, 2010 Phoenix AZ

Dr. Robin Hurley (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) was a Keynote speaker, presenting a 1/2 day lecture series:

"Neuroanatomy for Clinicians"

"Clinical Imaging for Clinicians"

"Neuropsychiatry of Mild TBI"

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: This program will provide the participants with information on physiologic mechanisms of head injury as they relate to audiology and how behavioral, emotional, psychiatric symptoms, and cognitive deficits as a result of traumatic brain injury can change an audiology and speech assessment and treatment plan.

INTENDED AUDIENCE: VA and Non-VA Audiologists

In the News!



December 10, 2009
(Hollywood, Florida)

Excerpts from "Candidate Biomarkers for PTSD Symptoms Identified"

by Deborah Brauser

Alterations in the neurosteroid biosynthetic pathways of veterans of the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan may be associated with multiple symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), according to an initial biomarker study presented here at the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology 48th Annual Meeting. In fact, serum levels of the neurosteroid allopregnanolone were found to be inversely associated with depression, anxiety, and pain symptoms.

"In other words, the greater the symptom severity, the lower the allopregnanolone levels,..." lead investigator Christine Marx, MD....told conference delegates.

...Results showed that "candidate biomarkers were associated with specific symptom domains in the veterans," reported Dr. Marx.

...In an additional small randomized controlled trial just completed, the investigators examined the effect of treatment with the neurosteroid pregnenolone in veterans with traumatic brain injury. Preliminary findings suggest that increases in neurosteroid levels after this intervention can predict PTSD symptoms "showing possible biomarker utility for the prediction of therapeutic response," said Dr. Marx. *"Improvements in resilience were significantly correlated with elevations in the neurosteroid pregnenolone in the group treated with pregnenolone,"* she added.

...Although Dr. Marx cautioned that biomarker research in psychiatric disorders is currently in its earliest stages, she said that these studies are yielding important clues to understanding and eventually treating these illnesses.

Noon V-tel Lecture Schedule:

March 12

Dr. Zachary H. Osborn (Columbia VAMC)

"Best Practices in Care: Seamless Transition Clinic"

This series is presented by V-tel and audio conferences. We are having increasing participation from sites outside VISN 6, so our assigned numbers may change. The number that each VISN 6 site will use to dial in will be included in an email notification prior to each presentation.

If you wish to attend from a site outside of VISN 6, please contact Mary Peoples (mary.peoples1@va.gov; 704-638-9000 ext 2956) so she can make the necessary arrangements.