



# VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health

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## New Projects

### *Engaging Chaplains in Mental Health Care*

VA Mental Health and Chaplaincy is a newly launched initiative that is funded by Central Office and housed within our MIRECC. Dr. Keith Meador is directing the initiative, and Dr. Jason Nieuwsma is serving as associate director. Ongoing efforts include outreach to faith communities, training conferences for chaplains, and research examining chaplains' roles in mental health care. Moving forward, a central aim of VA Mental Health and Chaplaincy will be to design, implement, and evaluate models for engaging care providers from faith communities, VA chaplaincy, and VA mental health in an integrated system of health care.

## Recently Approved Grants

### **Morey RA Neuroimaging Methods for Diagnosis of Mild TBI. VA Merit Review Award**

Mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) is challenging to identify because areas of injury are often too small to be seen on standard brain images. There has been keen interest in using diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) to improve identification of white matter injury associated with mTBI. The goal of this project is to provide quantitative assessment and visualization of white matter injury in single patients. We will use whole-brain analysis to compare each individual to a reference group of 100 Veterans without TBI. Significance testing will be done with both primary and confirmatory analytic methods: (i) using a method of non-parametric statistics known as permutation testing followed by a novel "threshold-free" correction for multiple comparison testing, and (ii) using population based inferential statistics to compute whole brain Z-statistic map followed by more typical cluster-based correction for multiple comparisons. Thus, this study moves beyond the conventional group-based comparisons. Our preliminary data is quite promising. If successful and then confirmed in a larger scale study, this approach will provide objective evidence of injury for diagnosing individual patients with mTBI in the clinical setting.

**Green K The Construct of Psychological Resilience and its Relationship to Hostility and PTSD.** Two year supplement to Grant Number 2R01MH062482-05 (Beckham PI)

**Moore SD Central Amygdala Kappa Opioid Receptor Mechanisms Underlying Effects of Ethanol.** NIH R21 Award

**Strauss J** co-investigator on two pilot studies funded by VA Health Services Research and Development: **Voils Developing Strategies for Maintaining Behavior Change; Allen Tailoring Coping Skills Training for African Americans with Osteoarthritis.**

**Dr. Beckham** (Director, MIRECC Genetics Core) is the co-mentor for a VA Career Development Award: **Ulmer C Brief sleep interventions for posttraumatic stress disorder.**

## Approved Research Sites & Contacts:

**Durham VA**  
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## Publications

Dedert EA, Calhoun PS, Watkins LL, Sherwood A, Beckham JC. *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Cardiovascular, and Metabolic Disease: A Review of the Evidence*. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. 2010; 39(1):61-78.

Nieuwsma JA, Pepper CM. *How etiological explanations for depression impact perceptions of stigma, treatment effectiveness, and controllability of depression*. *Journal of Mental Health* 2010; 19(1):52-61.

Taber KH, Hurley RA. *OEF/OIF Deployment-Related Traumatic Brain Injury*. *NC PTSD Research Quarterly* 2010 Winter; 21(1): 1-7.

## Resources for Providers



**PTSD Research Quarterly**  
advancing science and promoting understanding of traumatic stress

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### OEF/OIF Deployment-Related Traumatic Brain Injury

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

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/newsletters/ptsd-rq.asp>

## Invited Lectures

**Dr. Robin A. Hurley** (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) presented "*Windows to the Brain: Update on TBI Neuroimaging*" at the Brain Injury Association's 8th World Congress, Washington DC, March 12, 2010.

**Dr. Hurley** and **Dr. Katherine Taber** (MIRECC Assistant Director, Education) presented "Windows to the Brain: Formation and Maturation of the Brain" as part of the pre-meeting workshop "Antecedents of Mental Illness: The Development and Functional Anatomy of the Cortico-Limbic System". 21th Annual Meeting of the American Neuropsychiatric Association, Tampa FL, March 17, 2010. **Dr. Hurley** presented "*Traumatic Brain Injury Screening and Assessment: The Signature Wound of OEF and OIF*" for the Pee Dee AHEC, Florence, SC. April 23, 2010.

**Dr. Christine Marx** (Director, MIRECC Interventions Core) presented "Neurosteroids as Novel Therapeutics and Candidate Biomarkers in Schizophrenia and other CNS Disorders", NARSAD National Awareness Day, Duke University Medical Center, Durham NC, April 17, 2010.

**Dr. Jennifer Strauss** (MIRECC Researcher) presented "*Guided Imagery for Trauma (GIFT) – a Telemedicine Intervention for Women Veterans with PTSD Related to Military Sexual Trauma: Early RCT Results.*" Mid-Atlantic Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC), Durham NC, March, 2010.

## New ELAM Fellow

**Dr. Christine Marx** (Director, MIRECC Interventions Core) was recently awarded a fellowship in the Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) Program.



This is the nation's only in-depth program focused on preparing senior women faculty at schools of medicine, dentistry and public health for institutional leadership positions.

Over 550 senior women leaders have graduated from the program since 1995. ELAM alumnae make up 25 percent of

the executive positions in academic medicine and dentistry that are held by women.

## Meeting Presentations

Hurley RA, Goodwin M, McNamee S, Taber KH. *Teaching Materials to Translate Neuroanatomical Knowledge from Textbook to the War-Related Blast Injury Patient*. American Neuropsychiatric Association 21st Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL, March 17-20, 2010.

Strauss JL, Jeffreys A, Marx CE, Morey RA, Jeffreys, A, Almirall D, O'Loughlin SH, Close JE, Chaudhry N, Oddone, EZ. *A Clinician-Facilitated, Self-Management Intervention to Improve Access and Outcomes for Women Survivors of Military Sexual Trauma: RCT Results*. Annual HSR&D Career Development Conference, San Francisco CA, February 2010.

## Book Chapters

Taylor WD, Moore SD, Chin SC. *Neuroanatomy, Neurophysiology, and Neuropathology of Aging*. In: *The American Psychiatric Publishing Textbook of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 2nd edition, Blazer DG, Steffens DC, Busse EW, eds. APA Press 2009.

## National Service

**Dr. Jean Beckham** (Director, MIRECC Genetics Core) has accepted two additional leadership positions. She is serving as an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*. She is also an invited member of the Exploratory Committee on Global Mental Health, Department of Psychiatry and the Duke Global Health Institute.



## Outreach to VA & Community Providers

The North Carolina AHEC and Citizen Soldier Support Program present:

### Issues of Women Returning from Combat

**Dr. Harold Kudler (Associate Director, Clinical)** and **Dr. Kristy Straits-Troster (Assistant Director, Clinical)** have collaborated with the CSSP and NC-AHEC to develop this series of workshops.

Women military service members returning from deployment to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan face gender-specific readjustment issues as they transition back to their local communities. This full-day workshop will provide an overview of the health/mental health concerns of women veterans within the context of military culture, gender-specific roles, available support resources and effective treatments.

**Raleigh**  
**May 6**

**Winston-Salem**  
**May 14**

**Greenville**  
**May 27**

**Charlotte**  
**June 2**

<http://www.aheconnect.com/registration/coastal/findevents.asp>

### Web Courses for Providers



[www.aheconnect.com/citizensoldier](http://www.aheconnect.com/citizensoldier)

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

*Treating the Invisible Wounds of War:*  
*A. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*

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

These courses are 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.

Visit our web site for more resources

<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6.asp>

### Noon V-tel Lecture Schedule:

**May 14**

Dr. Murray Raskind (Seattle VAMC & Director, VISN 20 MIRECC)

*"Prazosin in Treatment of PTSD"*

**June - July - August**

Summer break

**September 10**

To be determined

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.