



VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health

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Research Component Update

MIRECC study featured in VA Research Currents!



Can the Internet help smokers kick the habit?

Dr. Pat Calhoun's study is testing whether a Web - based program can help OEF/OIF Veterans stop smoking. *QuitNet* features chat rooms, advice from experts, medication tips, buddy match-ups and other tools to support smokers in their quest to stop smoking.



According to Calhoun, barriers to Veterans' participation include long distances to clinics - especially for those in rural areas - and limited availability of specially trained counselors. These factors make it harder for patients to fit in clinic visits around their work schedules. Calhoun believes Web-based methods can be a potent alternative.

Recently Approved Grants

Marx C Neuroactive Steroids in OEF/OIF Veterans with TBI, VA Merit Review - The goal of this project is to conduct a randomized controlled trial utilizing a neurosteroid intervention in OEF/OIF Veterans with a history of mild traumatic brain injury (TBI). Mass spectrometry-based methodologies will be utilized to characterize neurosteroid profiles as candidate biomarkers of therapeutic response.

Marx C Neurosteroids and other Novel Therapeutics in Schizophrenia and PTSD, VA Career Development Transition Award The goal of this mid-level career award is to investigate neurosteroids and other small molecule pharmacological candidates as novel therapeutic agents for schizophrenia and PTSD.

Marx C "Neurosteroids and other Novel Agents for Smoking Cessation: Proof-of-Concept Investigations" (Rose PI) NIH / NIDA P50

Strauss J Randomized Controlled Trial of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) for Distress and Impairment in OEF/OIF Veterans. (Lang PI) CDMRP/Department of Defense

Strauss J Patient and Provider Interventions for Managing Osteoarthritis in Primary Care (Allen PI) NIH/NIAMS

Approved Research Sites & Contacts:

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919-416-5915

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Dr. Nagy Youssef (MIRECC Fellow) has been awarded the America's Top Psychiatrists 2010 Award in Mood Disorders. This award is provided by the Consumers' Research Council of America an independent research company based in Washington, DC.

Project Update!

Engaging Chaplains in Mental Health Care

This project 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. They have recently hosted their first conference at the VA's National Chaplain Center:



Bridging Chaplaincy and Mental Health Care August 26-27, 2010, Hampton, VA

Dr. Keith Meador
Bridging - Why Do It?

Dr. Kent Drescher
Etiology of OEF/OIF Problems/Combat Stressors
Chaplain Dr. Virginia Jackson & Dr. Pamela Swales
Models of Chaplain Ministry

Chaplain Dr. Laurie O'Reilly & Chaplain Derrel Hughes
Chaplaincy & Outpatient Mental Health Care

Dr. Kent Drescher
Beliefs, Cognitions, and Attributions
Red Flag Spiritual Issues & Moral Injury

Dr. Keith Meador
Gratitude - Forgiveness - Acceptance
Chaplain Dr. Virginia Swales & Dr. Pamela Swales
Women Veterans

Chaplain Dr. John Oliver
Family Issues & OEF/OIF - Family Panel

Dr. Robyn Walser
Empirically Supported Treatments - Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Part 1
Empirically Supported Treatments - Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Part 2
Empirically Supported Treatments - Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Part 3

Chaplain / MH Round Table Wrap-Up Discussion
Moving Toward Integration

Meeting Presentations



65th Annual Meeting

May 20-22, 2010, New Orleans LA
From Cells to Circuits to the Clinic

Symposium *Neurosteroids as Novel Therapeutics in Schizophrenia and other CNS Disorders*

Chair: Christine Marx

Speakers: Christine Marx, Adam Savitz,
Sherwood Brown, L. Fred Jarskog

Christine Marx

Proof of Concept Randomized Controlled Trial with Pregnenolone in mild TBI

Invited Lectures

Dr. Robin Hurley (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) presented "*Windows to the Brain: Mild TBI and PTSD.*" at the Updates on PTSD Conference, Palo Alto CA, September 15, 2010. This conference was sponsored by EES, the Sierra Pacific (VISN21) MIRECC and the National Center for PTSD. She presented at "*Windows to the Brain: War Related Mild TBI and its Comorbidities*" the VISN 6 Mental Health Subcouncil meeting, Durham NC, September 22, 2010. and at the Combat Casualty Symposium, Toronto Canada, October 7-8, 2010. This conference was jointly sponsored by the US Army Medical Research and Material Command, Defense Science and Technology Laboratories, and Defense Research and Development Canada.

Dr. Keith Meador (MIRECC Researcher) presented "*Spirituality, Theology and Health: Pitfalls and Possibilities*" Keynote Address at the Spirituality, Theology and Mental Health: Myth, Authority, and Healing Power" conference, September 2010, St. Johns College, Durham, England. He presented "*The Aging Embodied Soul: Frailty, Vulnerability, and Hope*" Keynote Address at the Ageing and Spirituality: Resistance, Resilience and Change conference, September 2010, Canberra, Australia.

Dr. Jason A. Nieuwsma (MIRECC Researcher) presented "*Families at Ease*" August 2010, Durham VA Medical Center, Durham NC.

Dr. Jennifer Strauss (MIRECC Researcher) presented "*GIFT: A Tele-Mental Health, Self-Management Intervention for Women Veterans with PTSD Related to Military Sexual Trauma - RCT Results*" at the Governor's Focus on Servicemembers, Veterans, and Their Families, September 2010, Raleigh NC



Free Web Courses for Providers

www.ahecconnect.com/citizensoldier

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

Treating the Invisible Wounds of War: Part 1 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

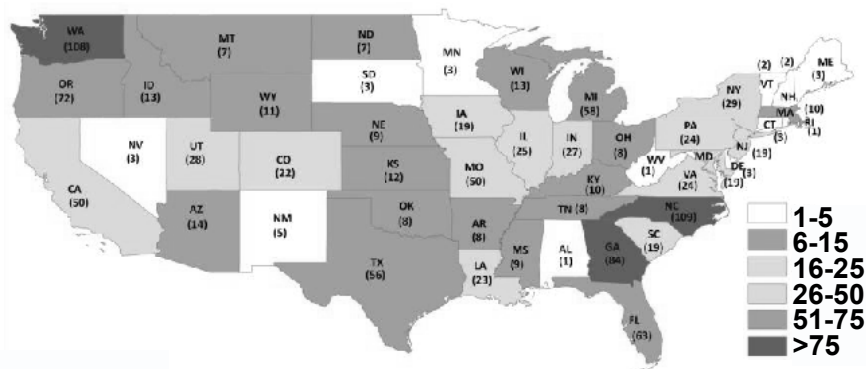
Treating the Invisible Wounds of War: Part 2 - Traumatic Brain Injury

Treating the Invisible Wounds of War: Part 3 - Issues of Women Returning from Combat

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.

This online training is available to free to providers nationwide. CSSP reports reaching several significant milestones in its on-line training program for Behavioral Health providers. For example, more than 1100 providers from throughout the US (see map) have completed Part 2.

Part 2 - Traumatic Brain Injury



New Service Roles

Dr. Robin Hurley (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) was selected to serve on the Internal Advisory Committee for Wake Forest University's Translational Science Institute.

Dr. Christine Marx (MIRECC Co-Associate Director, Research) was selected to serve on the Neurobiology Chair Search Committee for Duke University Medical Center.

Dr. Katherine Taber (MIRECC Assistant Director, Education) was elected to the Advisory Council of the American Neuropsychiatric Association. She was also selected to serve on the Advisory Committee for Biotechnology in Greater Charlotte.

Journal Articles

Haacke EM, Duhaime AC, Gean AD, Riedy G, Wintermark M, Mukherjee P, Brody DL, DeGraba T, Duncan TD, Elovic E, Hurley R, Latour L, Smirniotopoulos JG, Smith DH. *Common data elements in radiologic imaging of traumatic brain injury.* Journal of Magnetic Resonance Imaging 2010 Sep; 32(3): 516-43.

Kilts JD, Tupler LA, Keefe FJ, Payne VM, Hamer RM, Naylor JC, Calnaido RP, Morey RA, Strauss JL, Parke G, Massing MW, Youssef NA, Shampine LJ; the Veterans Affairs Mid-Atlantic Mental Illness, Research, Education and Clinical Center Workgroup,*, Marx CE. *Neurosteroids and Self-Reported Pain in Veterans Who Served in the U.S. Military after September 11, 2001.* Pain Medicine 2010 11(10): 1469-1476.

Naylor JC, Kilts JD, Hulette CM, Steffens DC, Blazer DG, Ervin JF, Strauss JL, Allen TB, Massing MW, Payne VM, Youssef NA, Shampine LJ, Marx CE. *Allopregnanolone levels are reduced in temporal cortex in patients with Alzheimer's disease compared to cognitively intact control subjects.* Biochim Biophys Acta. 2010 Aug;1801(8):951-9.

Visit our web site for more resources
<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6.asp>

New MIRECC Researcher

Amy Brannock, MSW, LCSW joined us in September. She is the Research Clinician and Study Coordinator for our DoD-funded trial of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for distress and impairment in



OEF/OIF veterans. Prior to joining our MIRECC research team, Amy worked as a case manager and psychotherapist in the OEF/OIF Program at the Durham VAMC. She is also active in community volunteer leadership positions with the Durham Friends Meeting, Durham Crisis Response Center, and Arts North Carolina. Formerly she

was the director of Arts Carolina at UNC-Chapel Hill. She was also the North Carolina Arts Council's first arts and tourism director, and served as the director of the Arts in Communities Program for 10 years. She holds a MSW from UNC-Chapel Hill, MS in public management from Carnegie Mellon University, and BA in Music Education from UNC-Chapel Hill. Amy lives in Durham with her husband, Roger Cook, and their dog and two cats. If you're lucky, you may catch Amy (vocals, autoharp, dulcimer) and Roger (bass, guitar, mandolin) performing at local venues with their acoustic ensemble, WestGlen.

Noon V-tel Lecture Schedule:

November 12

Dr. Harold Kudler (VISN 6 MIRECC)

"VA/DoD/State and Community Partnerships: Practical Lessons on Implementing a Public Health Model to Meet the Needs of OEF/OIF Veterans and their Families"

December 10 cancelled

January 14

Dr. David Oslin (VISN 4 MIRECC)

TBA

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.