

HSR&D Research Briefs

Translating
Research
into Practice

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HSR&D Targets Research for OIF/OEF Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs is now faced with the many complex issues confronting veterans who have suffered battlefield injury and trauma in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom – OIF) and Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom – OEF). Due to advanced body armor and state-of-the-art field-based treatment, many more soldiers are surviving injuries sustained during combat that might otherwise have been fatal. In fact, the percentage of fatal casualties has decreased dramatically from previous conflicts, from 19.1% for those who served in WWII – to 15.8% for those who served in Vietnam – to 9.4% for those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

More soldiers are surviving, but with multiple injuries that will require long-term care for conditions that include traumatic brain injury (TBI), spinal cord injury, amputation (600 amputations, thus far), burns, and mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). From the start of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2003 through the end of FY06, more than 631,000 soldiers have been discharged. Approximately 32.5% have sought VA healthcare and, of these, 35.7% have had a mental health condition or concern. In 2008, VA expects to treat 5.8 million veterans – an increase of 2.4% over 2007. Of these 5.8 million, VA will see 263,000 OIF/OEF veterans, an estimated increase of 54,000 veterans, or 25.8% more than the current fiscal year.

As these numbers increase, it is vitally important that VA be prepared to meet the unique healthcare needs of this new generation of veterans. Many of these veterans have experienced multiple injuries or polytrauma, which can include injuries to several organs, limb loss, sensory loss, burns, and chronic pain. Moreover,

OIF/OEF combat veterans are at higher risk for PTSD and other mental health disorders, and have sought care for a variety of these problems that can include adjustment disorder, anxiety, depression, and substance abuse.

VA research plays an important role in improving the health and care for these veterans. It is imperative that we continue our commitment to conducting research that will result in providing optimal care for all veterans, and that we place a high priority on addressing the urgent needs of these newest veterans returning from conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Congress recently provided a supplemental allocation of \$32.5 million in additional research funds to VA's Office of Research and Development to specifically target OIF/OEF-related research.

HSR&D research should address treatment effectiveness and/or quality of care, in terms of patient- or system-level outcomes. Funding opportunities in the area of deployment-related health are varied and include, but are not limited to:

- Diagnosis and treatment of traumatic brain injury;
- Effective treatments and management of acute pain and prevention of chronic pain with complex injuries;
- Early identification and treatment of psychiatric disorders, including PTSD and depression (35% of returning veterans have a mental health diagnosis);
- Optimal care for the unique needs of women veterans;
- Measurement of the quality of care in inpatient settings and during transitions between acute care and other delivery settings;
- Facilitation of access to care for the returning veteran, including a smooth transition from DoD (Department of

Continued on page 2

In This Issue

HSR&D Targets Research for OIF/OEF Veterans	Page 1
HSR&D National Meeting 2008—Call for Abstracts	Page 2
Awards and Recognition	Page 2
New Solicitations for Deployment Health Research Newly Funded	Page 2 Page 3

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VA HSR&D Research Briefs is available at www.hsr.d.research.va.gov and at vawww.hsr.d.research.va.gov



Publication Notification

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HSR&D Targets Research for OIF/OEF Veterans *Continued from page 1*

- Defense) to VA care; and
- Rehabilitation-related issues, including long-term care.

Severely injured veterans also may require extensive periods of rehabilitation to successfully integrate back into the community. Amputation and/or traumatic brain injury, particularly in combination with PTSD and other mental health problems, are among the conditions that require extensive rehabilitation, including help with transitioning back to “normal” life at home.

VA investigators are encouraged to submit proposals for projects that establish collaborations between HSR&D and VA's Rehabilitation Research and Development Service. In addition, the Department of Defense recently announced funding opportunities for FY07 through their Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Program, which will provide \$150 million for PTSD research and another \$150 million for TBI research. To learn more about the funding mechanisms available through this new DoD program (i.e., new investigator award, investigator initiated research award), visit www.grants.gov.

I encourage investigators to submit research applications that focus on OIF/OEF veterans and help us to meet our mission to provide the best care possible for our nation's veterans.

Seth A. Eisen, MD, MSc
HSR&D Director

HSR&D National Meeting 2008—Call for Abstracts

SAVE THE DATES: meeting tentatively planned for February 12-14, 2008.

(UPDATE: After print, dates moved to Feb 13-15)

“Implementation across the Nation: From Bedside and Clinic to Community and Home” is the theme for the 2008 HSR&D National Meeting. This year's meeting host is HSR&D's Center for Research on the Implementation of Innovative Strategies in Practice, located at the Iowa City Veterans Affairs Medical Center. For meeting

and abstract submission details, visit the National Meeting web site at www.hsrd.research.va.gov/meetings/2008. Abstracts are due October 9, 2007.

Are You Interested in Using STATA with VA Data?

Learn from self-avowed STATA devotee, Dr. Todd Wagner as he takes you through an hour-long session “**STATA: Getting Started and Being Productive with VA Data**”.

This HERC Health Economics Cyber Seminar was recorded and is available online for on-demand viewing. Join Dr. Wagner as he shares some of the tips, tools and techniques he's learned through more than 10 years experience using STATA. In this “STATA Primer” presentation, you'll learn about:

1. tips for avoiding the traps in getting VA data into STATA,
2. editing in STATA,
3. how STATA handles data (and how it does this differently than SAS),
4. STATA notation and help,
5. using STATA and basic STATA commands, and more.

Dr. Wagner's engaging and informative introduction to STATA will help you get started exploring how STATA might be useful for you in working with VA datasets. Even die-hard SAS fans will discover easier ways for getting answers using STATA. If you work with VA data, there's something here for you!

Access this presentation and others from the HERC Health Economics Cyber Seminar Series in the archives section of the HSR&D Cyber Seminar Catalog at www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/cyber_seminars/catalog.cfm#archive

Awards and Recognition

Kevin Volpp, MD, PhD, part of HSR&D's Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion (CHERP) in Philadelphia, received the Alice S. Hersh New Investigator Award at the AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting held in June 2007. This award recognizes health services researchers who show exceptional promise for future contributions.

Douglas Owens, MD, MS of VAMC Palo Alto, received the 2007 Under Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research. See presentation here www.hsrd.research.va.gov/news/research_news/ush-2007.cfm

Joseph Hanlon, PharmD, MS, of CHERP is the 2007 recipient of the American Geriatrics Society's Edward Henderson Award. This award is presented to an individual whose research and publications help shed light on and improve the problems inherent in elder care.

Paul Haidet, MD, MPH, from the Houston Center for Quality of Care and Utilization Studies received the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) National Award for Scholarship in Medical Education. The purpose of the award is to provide national recognition to individuals who have made major contributions with national impact in medical education.

HSR&D Advanced Career Development Awardee **Louise C. Walter, MD**, a staff physician and HSR&D investigator at the San Francisco VA Medical Center, received the SGIM "Junior Investigator of the Year" award.

HSR&D Career Development Awardee **Rachel Werner, MD, PhD**, of CHERP received the Best Published Research Paper of the Year award and the T. Franklin Williams Scholars Award in Geriatrics from SGIM.

New Solicitations for Deployment Health Research

VA is encouraging its investigators to submit proposals for several deployment health-related solicitations, such as the Department of Defense (DoD) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury (PTSD/TBI) Research Program. For general information about the program, please see the funding announcement on the HSR&D website at www.hsrd.research.va.gov. In addition, for information about ORD and HSR&D Deployment solicitations visit www.hsrd.research.va.gov/funding/solicitations.cfm.

Newly Funded

(Only awards/projects with funding start dates that have been confirmed since the last issue of Research Briefs in January 2007 are listed here.) For a complete listing of funded projects/awardees, visit the HSR&D web at www.hsr.d.research.va.gov

Career Awardees

Leslie Hausmann, PhD, MS	VA Pittsburgh Health Care System	The Role of Perceived Discrimination in Health Experiences and Behavior
Jennifer Strauss, MS	Durham VAMC	Mental Health Services Interventions for Veterans with PTSD
Rachel Werner, MD, PhD	Philadelphia VAMC	The Role of Performance Measurement in Improving Healthcare Quality

Research Projects

Combat Casualty Neurotrauma

Theresa Pape, DrPH, MA	Hines VAMC	Measurement and Outcomes Post Severe Brain Injury
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Implementation – Rapid Response Projects

David Armstrong, DPM	Hines VAMC	CPRS Diabetes Foot Reminder-Based Registry and Decision Support Tool
Bradford Felker, MD	VA Puget Sound Health Care System	Improving Access to and Quality of Mental Healthcare for OIF/OEF Veterans
Paul Heidenreich, MD, MPH	VA Palo Alto Health Care System	Cost-Effectiveness of Nurse Based Program for Heart Failure Patients
Sheri Reder, PhD	VA Puget Sound Health Care System	Long-Term Care Referral Tutorial
Jodie Traflet, PhD	VA Palo Alto Health Care System	Validation of Computerized Risk Assessment of Prescription Opioid Abuse
Sandeep Vijan, MD	VA Ann Arbor Health Care System	Colorectal Cancer Screening Preferences and Endoscopy Demand in VHA

Investigator-Initiated Research

Brian Cason, MD	San Francisco VAMC	Surgical Case Duration in the Department of Veterans Affairs
Alan Christensen, PhD	Iowa City VAMC	Patient and Provider Attitudes in the Healthcare Context
Melissa Farmer Coste, PhD	VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System	Identifying Successful Approaches to Smoking Cessation Treatment for Veterans
Teresa Damush, PhD	Indianapolis VAMC	Adapting Tools to Implement Stroke Risk Management to Veterans
Lisa Dixon, MD, MPH	VA Maryland Health Care System	The Effectiveness of FMPO in Improving the Quality of Care for Persons with SMI
Theodore Hahn, MD	VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System	Caregiver Psychoeducation and Support: Improving Outcomes in AD/ADRD
Thomas Houston, MD, MPH	Birmingham VAMC	Detailing Smoking Attributable Risks for Post-Surgery Morbidity: Planning for Policy and Clinical Interventions
Huangang Jia, MPH, PhD	North Florida/South Georgia VA Health Care System	VA and Non-VA Healthcare Utilization and Outcomes by Veterans with Stroke
Helen Kales, MD	VA Ann Arbor Health Care System	Modifiable Determinants of Anti-Depressant Adherence among Older Veterans
David Oslin, MD	Philadelphia VAMC	Primary Care-Based Disease Management for Alcohol Dependence
Joan Penrod, PhD	Bronx VAMC	Hospital Costs and Utilization of Veterans Receiving Palliative versus Usual Care
Mary Jo Pugh, PhD	VA South Texas Health Care System	Inappropriate Drug Use for Seniors: Should VA Adopt New HEDIS Measures?
Tiffany Radcliff, PhD	Denver VAMC	Hip Fracture Repair and Outcomes: A National Cohort Study of Veterans
Paula Schnurr, PhD	White River Junction VAMC	Re-Engineering Systems for the Primary Care Treatment of PTSD



Michelle Spont, PhD	Minneapolis VAMC	Participation in PTSD: Who Starts, Who Stays, and Who Drops Out
Carolyn Turvey, PhD	Iowa City VAMC	Co-Morbid Illness Management Program for Depression and Heart Failure
Dawne Vogt, PhD	VA Boston Health Care System	Further Development and Validation of the DRRRI
Andrew Zhou, PhD	VA Puget Sound Health Care System	Causal Inferences on Quality of Life with Deaths
<i>Nursing Research Initiative</i>		
April Gerlock, PhD, ARNP	VA Puget Sound Health Care System	Detection of Intimate Partner Violence: Implications for Interventions
Rene Martin, PhD, RN	Iowa City VAMC	Effects of Patient's Models of Heart Disease on Preventative Behaviors
<i>Service-Directed Projects</i>		
Michele Heisler, MD	VA Ann Arbor Health Care System	Adherence and Intensification of Medications (AIM) Implementation Study
<i>Service-Directed Research</i>		
Dewleen Baker, MD	VA San Diego Health Care System	Prospective Study of Psychological, Social, and Genomic Determinants of Risk and Resilience for Operational Stress in Marines
Steven Brown	Nashville VAMC	Biochemical Surveillance of OEF/OIF Deployed Soldiers Using Natural Language Processing Detection on BDD records
Michael Clark, PhD	Minneapolis VAMC	Pain, Psychiatric Disorders, and Disability among Veterans with and without Polytrauma
Linda Resnik, PhD, PT	Providence VAMC	Community Reintegration for OEF/OIF Veterans: Research Collaborations
Theodore Speroff, PhD	Nashville VAMC	Comparing Signs and Symptoms of OEF/OIF Veterans with PTSD to Veterans with PTSD/TBI Using Concept-Based Informatics Indexing of C&P Narrative Reports



Center for Information Dissemination and Education Resources

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