



Volume 2

Spring 2011

SERV Study Newsletter

Survey of Experiences of Returning Veterans



Department of Veterans Affairs



SERV Study updates

- New research project to survey Veterans that have just recently left Armed Services in Iraq and Afghanistan
- A collaboration between the Department of Veterans Affairs and Yale University
- We will be talking to Veterans from across the country
- Your comments welcome!

We are happy to report that 25 Veterans have now participated in our pilot study. This arm of the project consists of a one-time, open-ended set of questions involving aspects of military service, the transition to civilian life, methods of dealing with stress, and access to health care information.

We are in the process of gathering all the data and will soon be identifying common themes based on some of your responses. This project is important in helping us to design the larger SERV study which will launch later this year. We will be conducting these pilot interviews with approximately 35 more Veterans, and then this portion of the study will be complete.

The larger SERV study is still in the design phase, but we are very close to a final version of the questionnaire. We must get all necessary regulatory permissions from several VA Hospitals and universities before beginning this phase of the project, and we expect this to take several more months.

Thanks to all Veterans who have participated to date—your input is extremely helpful to us.

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Keeping our study participants informed

Several times each year we will be mailing you this newsletter with information on study progress. We expect to have much more news for you as the project gets underway. We value the participation of our study participants, and we encourage any comments/questions (*please see back page for ways to contact us.*) We hope to showcase a different team member each issue.

We will also be gathering useful health information so that you may take advantage of services that are offered in your location.

Brandi Fuhr, BA**Meet the Yale / Connecticut staff:**

Dr. Rani Desai, PhD, MPH is an experienced researcher at VA Connecticut Healthcare System in West Haven, Connecticut and is the lead on the study. She is also an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine and Director of the Women and Trauma Research Core of Women's Health Research at Yale.

Brandi Fuhr, BA is a program analyst and the first person our Veteran participants will speak with regarding participation in this project. She is responsible for telephone inquiries, eligibility determination, and obtaining informed consent. She also conducts interviews for the pilot study and is an invaluable member of the team. She has over 10 years of research experience at VA Connecticut.

Beth Dombrowski, MBA is the project manager and is responsible for survey development, regulatory submissions, and day-to-day study operation. She has over 30 years of experience in the research field at both Yale University and VA Connecticut. She is also assisting with the pilot study interviews.



Yale University

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**Survey of
Experiences of
Returning Veterans**

Consent forms: why are they so important?

Because the SERV Study is voluntary and qualifies as 'research', we need special permission from the VA to speak with you. Before any activity on a research study can begin, participants must give "informed consent."

The consent form must describe the purpose of the study, all activities related to the study, and any associated risks and benefits. In addition, participants must be given ample time to review the consent and ask any questions that arise; remember that NO question is insignificant. There is often complicated language which may need interpretation.

Research studies are voluntary and the decision to participate is up to you. If you decide not to participate, there should be no effect on any of the regular health care that you receive.

However, if you do decide you would like to enroll in this or any other study, it is important to initial and sign each part of the document where indicated so that we can be assured our participants have read and understood each page

You ALWAYS have the option to change your mind, even after the study has begun. Informed consent is required by law and is the first and most important part of your participation in any research study.

Useful links:

National PTSD website:

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/>

PTSD Program Locator:

http://vaww1.va.gov/directory/guide/PTSD_f1sh.asp?isFlash=1

For a VA facility near you:

<http://vaww1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1>

We're on the web!

<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn1/serv/>