In Memoriam

We are saddened to report the death of Col. (Ret.) Hector Henry II, MD. Dr. Henry was a highly valued member of our Advisory Board for many years, bringing the Veteran’s perspective to their work. He served our country for over 40 years as an officer, medical provider and commander. Col. Henry’s combat deployments included Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm, the Second Gulf War, and Operation Enduring Freedom. An expert in adult and pediatric urology, he joined the Salisbury VA and Wake Forest School of Medicine seven years ago following more than three decades at Duke. The legacy of his remarkable military service and medical career is a wonderful gift to be cherished. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, children and other family members as they grieve his loss.

Focus on the VISN

North Carolina Vet-To-Vet (NCV2V)

Dr. Harold Kudler (Associate MIRECC Director, Clinical) and MIRECC colleagues have partnered with the North Carolina Division of Mental Health to facilitate development of a collaborative peer support system to augment existing outreach services and support for returning service members, Veterans and families. NCV2V is envisioned as a community-based veteran peer initiative that will reach all one hundred counties within the state. NCV2V will engage, educate and motivate Veterans and their families where they live to mitigate suffering within this population.

Recently Approved Grants

Katherine Taber (Col) (Perlick, PI - VISN 3 MIRECC) Multi-Family Group Intervention for OEF/OIF Traumatic Brain Injury Survivors and Their Families. VA RR&D
Focus on the VISN
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Invited Lectures

Dr. Robin A. Hurley (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) presented *Windows to the Brain: Mental Health Aspects of TBI* as part of Wake Forest University Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Grand Rounds on November 15, 2013 in Winston-Salem, NC. She was a presenter and discussant for “Traumatic Brain Injury...The Silent Epidemic”, free training sponsored by Operation Recovery, November 20 2013, Mecklenburg country Police and Fire Training Academy, Charlotte NC.

Dr. Jason A. Nieuwsma (MIRECC researcher) presented “Integrating chaplaincy and mental health care: Findings from a mixed methods study in the U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs” at the Duke University Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health Research Seminar in July 2013, Durham, NC.

New Service Role

Dr. Robin Hurley (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) is serving as Chair of the TBI Advisory Committee workgroup addressing FY13 / FY14 Recommendation #11 “Summarize and educate the VHA clinicians in the field, Veterans and caregivers on the type and availability of mental health specialty care services related to TBI care”.

Clinical Component Update

Training for Community Providers Goes National

There is now a national training program based on the workshops developed by Dr. Harold Kudler (Associate MIRECC Director, Clinical) in collaboration with the North Carolina Area Health Education Center (AHEC) and the University of North Carolina’s Citizen Soldier Support Program. MIRECC personnel collaborated with the National AHEC on adapting the training. Ten regional “train the trainer” workshops prepared 247 AHEC staff/partners representing 135 centers (see maps) - more than half of the nation’s 257 AHECs - to facilitate delivery of the training to civilian health professionals.

The goal of training 10,000 providers has been surpassed and the number continues to grow. As VA forges ahead in its efforts to provide Veteran-Centered Care in its facilities and in partnership with community providers, this national training continues to support community competence in recognizing and treating the effects of deployment stress in partnership with VA.

Journal Articles


Meeting Presentations

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies
29th Annual Meeting
November 7 - 9, 2013, Philadelphia PA

Brancu, Kudler, Mann-Wrobel, Robbins, Swinkles
Fostering Resilience in Providers: Compassion Fatigue Prevention for Researchers, Clinicians, and Helpline Responders Working with Trauma Populations (Workshop)

Brancu, Wagner, Calhoun, Thompson, Green, Elbogen, Robbins, Fairbank, Registry Workgroup, Beckham
PTSD in Iraq and Afghanistan Era Veterans May Diminish the Impact of Social Support as a Resiliency Factor

Elbogen, Wagner, Beckham
Developing a Risk Screen for Violence in Veterans

Hawn, Keuper, Overstreet, Stratton, Brown, Amstadter
Examination of Risk Propensity, Perceived Threat, Combat Experiences and PTSD in a Sample of Returning Veterans

Keuper, Hawn, Overstreet, Berenz, Brown, McDonald, Pickett, Danielson, Thomas, Amstadter
Family History of Alcohol Use Disorder Moderates the Relationship between Post-Deployment Social Support and Average Drinking Quantity in OIF/OEF Combat Veterans

Kirby, Ulmer, Dennis, Roberts, Beckham
Effectiveness of Group ACT Interventions in Treatment of PTSD

Kirlic, Figley, Courtols, Kudler, Osofsky
Building Resilience Among Young Clinicians and Researchers Working with Trauma-exposed Populations (Workshop)

McDonald, Mancini, Pickett, Kreutzer, Beckham, Ketchum, Melanko, Cifu
Resilience is a Common Adjustment Trajectory After Traumatic Injury

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Free Web Courses for Providers
Treating the Invisible Wounds of War
www.aheccconnect.com/citizensoldier

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

1 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (english & spanish editions)
2 - A Primary Care Approach
3 - Issues of Women Returning from Combat
4 - Recognizing the Signs of mTBI during Routine Eye Examinations
5 - Understanding Military Family Issues

These courses were developed by MIRECC faculty in collaboration with Citizen Soldier Support Program (CSSP) and North Carolina Area Health Education Center (NC AHEC). They 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.
McDonald, Yoash-Gantz, Walker, Pickett, Cifu, Tupler
Mild Traumatic Brain Injury is Associated with Health Problems Beyond the Impact of PTSD, Depression, and Anxiety Disorders

Nieuw sma, Rhodes, Bates, Cantrell, Meador
Chaplains’ Engagement in Enhancing Resiliency for Service Members and Veterans

Overstreet, Hawn, Keuper, Stratton, McDonald, Amstadter
Associations Between Distress Tolerance, Anxiety Sensitivity, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Veterans

Stratton, Amstadter, McDonald
An Evaluation of Three Models of Resilience in a Sample of Military Service Members and Veterans

Van Voorhees, Robbins, Calhoun, Dennis, Beckham
DHEA, DHEAS, and Cortisol as Potential Biomarkers of Childhood Trauma Exposure and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Green KT, Beckham JC, Youssef N, Elbogen EB.


Ulmer CS, Calhoun PS, Bosworth HB, Dennis MF, Beckham JC.

Van Voorhees EE, Dennis MF, Calhoun PS, Beckham JC.

Dr. Eric Elbogen’s research on returning Veterans’ risk factors for dangerous behaviors was recently featured.

When reintegration goes awry: Unraveling the factors that put Veterans at risk for crime, violence, and homelessness
http://www.research.va.gov/currents/fall2013/fall2013-5.cfm

Elbogen is a forensic psychologist who studies the link between mental health and criminal behavior, particularly violent crime. In recent years, much of his work has focused on returning Veterans. ...... one of his key messages is that PTSD is not the same for each Veteran. It’s different from one person to the next. Some might have PTSD symptoms that, according to research, do predict violent behavior. Others might have a form of the disorder that is in no way linked to violence or aggression. ... He acknowledges that some of the factors are intertwined in subtle ways, and there is much that even the experts don’t fully understand. But they all have to be considered to “avoid a kneejerk reaction” to a complex problem, he asserts. “The PTSD diagnosis is relevant,” he says, “but it’s the tip of the iceberg. And people often stop there in terms of looking at why an incident may have happened.” ... The bottom line, he says, is that “the majority of Veterans, with or without PTSD, did not report violence, aggression, or criminal behavior. At the same time, the data indicated that violence remains a serious problem for a subset of Veterans.”
http://www.research.va.gov/currents/fall2013/fall2013-5.cfm

Vrana SR, Calhoun PS, McClernon FJ, Dennis MF, Lee ST, Beckham JC. Effects of smoking on the acoustic startle response and prepulse inhibition in smokers with a n d w i t h o u t p o s t r a u m a t i c s t r e s s d i s o r d e r. Psychopharmacology (Berl) 2013; 230: 477-485.

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