



VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health

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Announcements

Welcome to our new Director!



John A. Fairbank, PhD, is the new Director of our MIRECC. Dr. Fairbank did his undergraduate studies at Rutgers University. He earned his Ph.D. in clinical psychology at Auburn University. He is a Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Duke University Medical Center. He is also faculty in the Department of Psychology at Duke University.

Dr. Fairbank's research interests include epidemiological and clinical studies of anxiety and

mood disorders in adults and children. He is particularly interested in traumatic stress reactions and PTSD. He co-directs the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress. He is also a co-investigator for a National Institute of Mental Health training grant focused on disaster mental health research.

Dr. Fairbank is very active nationally. He is a past president of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. He continues to serve that Society in an advisory capacity. He was a member of the National Academy of Sciences-Institute of Medicine committee that studied compensation for war-related PTSD. He also serves on advisory boards for the National Center for PTSD, Psychology Beyond Borders, and the Center for Child and Family Health in Durham, NC.

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In the News!



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Serving a New Generation of Veterans

MIRECC researcher and VA clinician **Dr. Jennifer Strauss** testified before the Senate Committee on Veteran's Affairs on April 9 about some of the challenges faced by VA clinicians as they progress in research career development, as reported in the June issue of *Monitor on Psychology*.



Announcements

Welcome to our new Director!

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His interests for the MIRECC include:

- ★ Facilitating post-deployment mental health research, education and clinical collaborations among VISN 6 centers and across MIRECCs
- ★ Promoting research on military and veterans' families
- ★ Exploring the effectiveness of innovative models and methods -- such as the learning collaborative approach -- to promote adoption, adaptation, and implementation of evidence-based practices for post-deployment mental health problems.

Book Chapters

Taber KH, Hurley RA. Neuroanatomy for the Psychiatrist. In: Hales RE, Yudofsky SC, Gabbard G (eds). The American Psychiatric Publishing Textbook of Psychiatry 5th Edition. American Psychiatric Press 2008: 157-189

Research Briefing May 30, Durham NC

Mr. Kevin S. Tewes met with Durham VA research staff for a briefing and tour of facilities. Mr. Tewes is Senator Richard Burr's Legislative Assistant for the United States Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. Senator Burr is a Ranking Member of that committee.

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Clinical Component Update

PAINTING A MOVING TRAIN:

Working with Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan and Their Families

Veterans and families are turning to mental health and other care providers in many settings. These providers need training on military culture, VA services, readjustment issues and best clinical practices. "Painting a Moving Train" was designed to meet these needs. This clinical training program has now been delivered in all 9 state districts served by the NC Area Health Education Centers (AHEC). More than 1000 mental health and primary care providers have been trained.

Each program consisted of a shorter evening session followed by a full day meeting. The evening session was a 1.5 hour interactive training tailored for primary care providers.

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Publications

Beckham JC, Becker ME, Hamlett-Berry KW, Drury PD, Kang HK, Wiley MT, Calhoun PS, Moore SD, Bright MA, McFall ME. Preliminary findings from a clinical demonstration project for veterans returning from Iraq or Afghanistan. *Mil Med.* 2008 May;173(5):448-51.

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Outreach to Veterans and Families

Talk, Listen, Connect: Deployments, Homecomings, Changes April 29, 2008 Arlington, VA

Sesame Workshop has launched the second phase of their outreach program for military families with young children - **Talk, Listen, Connect**. Dr. Kudler (pictured below) serves on the Advisory Board for this project!

As many as 700,000 children under the age of five have a parent in the military. These young children are experiencing the effects of having a parent deployed, perhaps multiple times. Some parents return

home changed due to a combat-related injury, visible or invisible. Our MIRECC is working with DoD, state government, and community partners to help military families with young children know about **Talk, Listen, Connect**. Please take time to watch this program. Consider sharing it with those who might benefit from it.

The entire **Talk, Listen Connect** series (available in English and Spanish) is **free**. Download it from:

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/tlc/>

Or, order a copy through Military OneSource

<http://www.militaryonesource.com/>

All VA libraries also have a copy of **Talk, Listen, Connect** available, thanks to the efforts of the VA's Library Network Office.



Dr. Kudler and his wife, Susan, are pictured here with Sesame Street residents, Elmo and Rosita at the launch celebration.

Research Briefing

May 30, Durham NC

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The visit began with an entrance briefing. Attending were Mr. Ralph T. Gigliotti, FACHE, Medical Center Director, Mr. Bradley Olson, Administrative Officer for Research and Mr. Hal Hummel, Public Affairs Officer. Mr. Tewes later met with members of the VISN 6 MIRECC research staff for presentations on their work.

John A. Fairbank, PhD (MIRECC Director) opened the meeting. He presented an overview of the MIRECC's translational medicine structure and its focus on post-deployment mental illness. Jean Beckham, PhD (MIRECC Assistant Director of Research - Genetics) described the multi-site OEF/OIF Registry Study. She emphasized its central importance for the MIRECC's genetics research program. Rajendra Morey, MD (Assistant Director of Research - Neuroimaging) followed with a presentation on neuroimaging. His focus was the research path for finding effective treatments. Christine Marx, MD, (Assistant Director of Research - Interventions) gave the final presentation. Dr. Marx described her work with novel intervention treatments and neurosteroid biomarker levels. Research collaborations with the Department of Defense were also discussed.

Several MIRECC researchers took part in later meetings. Jennifer Strauss, PhD described her work as part of the Health Services Research and Development presentation. Scott Moore, M.D., Ph.D. (Assistant Director of Research - Neuroscience) gave an overview of neurobiological research at the Durham VAMC. The Neurobiology Research presentation was followed by a tour of their research lab facilities.

All who attended considered the meetings worthwhile. This was a valuable opportunity to keep our Nation's policymakers informed about the importance of the MIRECC's mission-related research.

Publications

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McDonald SD, Beckham JC, Morey R, Marx C, Tupler LA, Calhoun PS. Factorial invariance of posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms across three veteran samples. *J Trauma Stress*. 2008 Jun;21(3):309-17.

Marx CE, Yuan P, Kilts JD, Madison RD, Shampine LJ, Manji HK. Neuroactive steroids, mood stabilizers, and neuroplasticity: alterations following lithium and changes in Bcl-2 knockout mice. *International Journal of Neuropsychopharmacology* 2008 Jun;11(4):547-52.

Taber KH, Hurley RA. Glia: Not Just Glue. *J Neuropsychiatry Clin Neurosci* 2008 Spring; 20(2):124-129

Clinical Component Update

PAINTING A MOVING TRAIN

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The full day meeting was designed for mental health providers and community leaders. CMEs and CEUs were provided through AHEC. Many of the sessions were sold out. Plans are underway to adapt the curriculum to a web-based format for national roll-out. In addition, the curriculum design will be presented at the national AHEC meeting this year for consideration for national dissemination. The shorter primary care provider curriculum is posted at www.giveanhour.org as part of their training for volunteers. Two new AHEC training partnerships are in development. One is a TBI curriculum (see article below). The other is a special program for pastoral counselors and leaders of faith-based organizations.

New Education Projects

Outreach to Community Providers



The recently completed workshop series "*Painting a Moving Train*" was very successful, as detailed elsewhere in this issue. **Dr. Robin Hurley** (Associate Director, Education) and **Dr. Katherine Taber** (Assistant Director, Education) are working with the Citizen-Soldier Support Program and North Carolina's AHEC to develop a similar series of workshops on TBI.

Noon V-tel Lecture Schedule:

July 11

Ron Cox (Veterans Benefits Administration)
"Financial Issues for Veterans: What Every VA Provider Should Know"

August 8

Rich Toscano (Tuscaloosa VAMC) & Charles McGeough (North Texas VHCS)
"CWT: Evidence Based Supported Employment Implementation"

September 12

Kimberly A. Arlinghaus, MD (Houston VAMC & VISN 16 MIRECC)
"Basic Cognitive and Neuropsychiatric Assessment"

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.