



“WRAIR Forward”

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COMMANDER’S CORNER

USAMRU-E helps address the behavioral health needs of Soldiers by assessing the well-being of returning units on behalf of the Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC). However, benchmarking Soldiers with behavioral health problems and evaluating post-deployment assessment strategies are only one part of our mission. We are also dedicated to promoting the resilience of all Soldiers as they face the challenges of a military career and operational deployments. USAMRU-E’s research with Basic Combat Training Soldiers is leading the Army’s effort to ensure that Soldiers receive validated resilience training. USAMRU-E and the newly established Resilience Training Research Office are contributing to the development of the the Army’s institutional and operational Resilience Training. Consistent with the Army’s concept of Comprehensive Mental Fitness, USAMRU-E is involved in both prevention of behavioral health problems and identification of those with such difficulties.

-MAJ Dennis McGurk

MENTAL FITNESS STUDY AT BASIC COMBAT TRAINING: DATA COLLECTION COMPLETED

Data collection for two group randomized trials at Basic Combat Training was completed at the end of October 2009. These two trials assess (1) the efficacy of resilience training on behavioral health outcomes and (2) the efficacy of sport psychology techniques developed by the Army Center for Enhanced Performance on performance and performance-related mental skills.

- The first study assessed 2,130 Soldiers. In all, 42 platoons were randomized to either 2-hours of resilience training or 2 hours of military history.
- The second study assessed a total of 2,396 Soldiers. A total of 47 platoons were randomized to either 8 hours of embedded resilience training or 8 hours of military history. Dr. Adler (study Principal Investigator) and LTC(P) Bliese met with Research Triangle Institute (RTI) data base managers and statisticians to analyze data (8-9 OCT 09 and 2-4 DEC 09; Research Triangle Park, NC).

Initial results were briefed to BG Cornum, Director, Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (Crystal City, VA; 11 DEC 09; Dr. Adler) and COL Castro, Director, Military Operational Medicine Research Program, Medical Research and Materiel Command (Fort Detrick, MD; 5 DEC 09). Follow-up briefs are scheduled for January.

ASSESSING PDHA DELIVERY MODELS

As requested by the Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC), Dr. Wright and MAJ McGurk led a USAMRU-E team that assessed different types of post-deployment behavioral health assessment. The 172nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team in US Army Europe used different strategies for completing the DoD’s mandatory Post-Deployment Health Assessment(PDHA): One-on-one behavioral health interviews with providers or the routine PDHA procedure. The strategies were split between Grafenwoehr and Schweinfurt, the two different BCT locations.



The purpose of the assessment was to examine the impact of different PDHA strategies on stigma and barriers to care, referral rates, and Soldier satisfaction. Approximately 4,000 Soldiers were surveyed at each location and a follow-up survey is scheduled in three to six months.

The USAMRU-E team included Dr. Wright (Project Lead), MAJ McGurk, CPT Wood, Ms. Salvi, Ms. Eckford, and SGT Martinez. A series of meetings in support of training included:

- Coordination and training meetings with CPT Wood, Ms. Salvi, and MAJ Cabrera from SFSS in Grafenwoehr (21 OCT 09)
- Coordination meetings with Dr. Wright, MAJ McGurk, CPT Wood, and Ms. Salvi in Grafenwoehr (30 OCT 09).
- On site consultation with Dr. Wright, CPT Wood, Ms. Salvi, Ms. Eckford, and SGT Martinez during the first week of reintegration in Grafenwoehr (1-6 NOV 2009).

COMMAND-DIRECTED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT BRIEFED

MAJ McGurk, Dr. Wright and CPT Wood briefed COL Blackburn, Commander of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment (2SCR), and CPT Burgess, Regimental Surgeon, in Vilseck, Germany on results of a Command-Directed Behavioral Health Assessment (20 NOV 09). The assessment of the was conducted at four and nine months following the 2SCR’s return from a 15-month deployment to Iraq in November 2008. Data included surveys from five maneuver squadrons, focus groups, and archival data on unit-level risk indicators.

RESILIENCE TRAINING TESTED IN GROUP RANDOMIZED TRIAL

(New Publication)

Adler, A.B., Bliese, P.B., McGurk, D., Hoge, C.W., & Castro, C.A. (2009). Battlemind Debriefing and Battlemind Training as early interventions with soldiers returning from Iraq: Randomization by platoon. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 77, 928–940.

Supplemental analyses are available on-line.



MG GILMAN BRIEFED

MAJ McGurk briefed MG Gilman, Commanding General, Medical Research and Materiel Command (Pirmasens, Germany, 21 OCT 09).

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & USAMRU-E



USAMRU-E staff were part of several presentations at the 8th International Conference on Occupational Stress and Health in November 2009:

In a symposium entitled “An Occupational Health Approach to Resilience in the Military”, chaired by Dr. Adler, talks included:

- Adler, A.B., Moss, A., McGurk, D., Cohn, A., Hodson, S., & Bliese, P.D. Building resilience in Basic Combat Training: A prototype for occupational health.
 - Britt, T.W., Wright, K.M., Adler, A.B., Bliese, P.D. Quality sleep as a resource for dealing with occupational stressors: Soldiers responding to combat exposure.
 - Riviere, L., Adler, A.B., McGurk, D., & Bliese, P.D. Correlates of mental and physical resetting after a combat deployment.
 - Castro, C.A., & Adler, A.B. Re-conceptualizing combat-related traumatic stress using an occupational health model.
- CPT Wood also presented a talk at the conference:
- Wood, M. D., Bliese, P. D., Kim, P., & Klocko, R. P. (2009, November). The Effects of Combat, Mental Health Symptoms and Stigma on Mental Health Utilization.

KEYNOTE IN ESTONIA

MAJ McGurk presented a keynote speech at the International Military Testing Association meeting in Tartu, Estonia (3 NOV 09). The talk, prepared by COL Castro and MAJ McGurk, was entitled: *Evidence-Based Solutions in the Military: Avoiding the Snake Oil Salesman*.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH GROUPS

TTCP MEETING

Dr. Adler, COL Castro, and MAJ McGurk participated in mid-year meeting for The Technical Cooperation Program (TTCP) Technical Panel 13, “Psychological Health and Operational Effectiveness” (16-17 NOV 09) in Puerto Rico. Key topics of discussion included research and training for third-location decompression programs and the development of an occupational health model for post-traumatic stress disorder.



NATO MEETING ON MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING

Dr. Adler attended the first NATO Research Meeting on Mental Health Training (HFM 103/RTG) in Brussels (14-18 DEC 09).

NATO MEETING ON MORAL DILEMMAS

MAJ McGurk attended the NATO Research Meeting on Moral Dilemmas and Mental Health Problems (HFM 179/RTG) in Breda, The Netherlands (13-15 OCT 09).



PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH PROGRAM

There were several activities related to the unit’s support of the Psychological Health Program directed by the Military Operational Medicine Research Program:

- MAJ McGurk and Dr. Adler attended a WRAIR program planning meeting with other WRAIR Staff (5 OCT 09, Frederick, MD).
- Dr. Adler attended the external review of the Millennium Cohort Study task area (22 OCT 09; Frederick, MD).
- LTC(P) Bliese worked with the staff on writing projects (26-27 OCT 09, Heidelberg)
- COL (R) Hoge worked with Dr. Adler on developing Advanced Resilience Training for Post-Deployment (12-16 NOV 09; Philadelphia).

MAJ MCGURK NAMED CHIEF OF RESILIENCE TRAINING RESEARCH OFFICE

In a move that reflects the priority given to the field of resilience training and associated research, MAJ McGurk was named Chief of the WRAIR’s Resilience Training Research Office (RTRO). This office, formerly known as the Battlemind Transition Office, is responsible for transitioning



research-based training to the Army, conducting quality assurance, and performing program evaluation. The resilience training is being incorporated into the Army’s Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program. The office is currently located at the WRAIR in Silver

Spring, MD and MAJ McGurk will lead the office from Germany until he moves in the summer.

In support of this work:

- MAJ McGurk completed the 2 week Master Resilience Trainer course in Philadelphia (6-17 DEC 09),
- MAJ McGurk presented a one day pilot course on military-related resilience training (adapted extensively from the Battlemind Training program) as part of the MRT course curriculum, along with RTRO staff members Mr Rinehart, USAMRU-E’s CPT Wood and AMEDD Center and School staff (16 DEC 09).

New training has been developed for this program by Dr. Adler, MAJ McGurk, and Mr. Rinehart including Resilience First Aid and Pre-Deployment Resilience Training for Warriors. These new modules reflect an interactive student-driven approach and integrate language from the Master Resilience Trainer course component spearheaded by the University of Pennsylvania’s Dr. Reivich. All former Battlemind Training modules will be updated using these guidelines over the next few months.

MAJ McGurk and Dr. Adler also participated in meetings with Comprehensive Soldier Fitness staff members to develop plans for the Army’s new resilience training courses.

PERSONNEL UPDATES

- SGT Martinez was promoted on 30 OCT 09.
- USAMRU-E NCOIC SFC Abrahamson left the unit to assume the position of AIT Platoon Sergeant, Ft Sam Houston (22 DEC 09).

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