



TBI/PTSD/ Mental Health

U.S. service members face extraordinary health issues in the areas of traumatic brain injury, posttraumatic stress and mental wellbeing. HJF personnel are working with military medical researchers on a wide range of programs addressing the neurological and psychological wounds they face.

Center for Neuroscience and Regenerative Medicine

To improve traumatic brain injury (TBI) treatment and transform brain injury research, the U.S. Congress established the Center for Neuroscience and Regenerative Medicine (CNRM) in 2008. The center's collaborative research efforts emphasize aspects of TBI that have high relevance to military populations.

CNRM works with a large number of participating clinicians and scientists from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU), National Institutes of Health and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Their mission: to build an interdisciplinary collaboration to catalyze TBI research.

The center focuses on directed studies to accomplish multiple goals. A broad range of TBI research approaches were integrated into six programs, which, together with the center's scientific cores, form the heart of CNRM. The six programs are neuroimaging, biomarkers, neuroprotection, neuroregeneration, neuroplasticity and rehabilitation.

One endeavor making progress is the Trauma Head Injury Neuroimaging Classification study, which uses magnetic resonance imaging on closed-head injuries rather than standard CT scans to identify the extent of injury and the degree to which the injury resolves or progresses. Hyperacute MRI studies have already identified new features in TBI patients that were unrecognized with CT imaging.

Whether the study focuses on brain imaging, analyzing tissue specimens or testing mechanisms of neuroregeneration, CNRM's unique infrastructure and collaborative research remain focused on a single goal: improving patients' lives.

Center for Deployment Psychology

The Center for Deployment Psychology, a part of USU, coordinates activities across a network of training sites at 11 military medical centers nationwide and prepares health care professionals to better meet the deployment-related emotional and psychological needs of military personnel and their families who undergo increased stress and psychological health challenges during deployment.

The center trains health care professionals to provide high-quality, culturally sensitive, evidence-based behavioral health services to military personnel, veterans and their families. They do this through live presentations, online learning resources, ongoing consultations and state-of-the-art education.

One example is Topics in Military & Deployment Psychology, a five-day course for military behavior health professionals that addresses the unique demands that service members and behavioral health providers may experience. Focusing on key clinical conditions and critical issues seen in service members, the course provides evidence-based approaches to assess and treat posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal behavior and sleep problems.



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STARRS-LS

A longitudinal study of soldiers recruited during the Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers (Army STARRS) is under way at USU, with support from HJF. The study builds on the work of Army STARRS, the largest research project designed to investigate risk factors and protective factors for suicide, suicide-related behavior, and other related mental and behavioral health issues. It is the largest and most comprehensive research study of mental health risk and resilience ever conducted among Army personnel.

The original study was designed and conducted by an interdisciplinary team of experts led by two co-principal investigators, Robert J. Ursano, M.D., at USU, and Murray B. Stein, M.D., at the University of California, San Diego. Scientists from Harvard Medical School, the University of Michigan, the National Institute of Mental Health and the Army also contributed to the project. The same collaborators have partnered on the follow-on study called STARRS-LS.

Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress

The Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress was created to address Department of Defense concerns about the psychological effects and health consequences resulting from the impact of traumatic events. The center opened its doors on USU's Bethesda, Maryland, campus in 1987 with its founding director Robert J. Ursano, M.D., chair of the University's Department of Psychiatry.

Aiming to mitigate the damaging effects of trauma resulting from exposure to natural and man-made disasters, including weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and bioterrorism, the center has brought scholarly and research-oriented problem solving to the mental and behavioral health problems of service members and the public alike.

Today the center teams on important programs with leading academic and research institutions. To identify modifiable risk and resilience factors of service members, the center continues to work on social and epidemiologic studies, such as the National Military Bereavement Study, which examines the impact of a U.S. service member's death on surviving family members. This study, the first large scientific study of its kind, will provide a scientific basis to inform policies affecting survivor care.

Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune, Intrepid Spirit

HJF supports the Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune's Intrepid Spirit Concussion Recovery Center. The center, which opened in 2013, provides integrated, holistic, interdisciplinary care for service members who have sustained a concussion or TBI or suffer from PTSD.

The interdisciplinary services include primary care, neurology, occupational therapy, neuropsychology, behavioral health, spiritual counseling, speech therapy, physical therapy, case management and education. The center also teams with Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center staff to improve education and care coordination after a TBI. HJF provides clinical research support for the hospital's National Intrepid Center of Excellence.

Millennium Cohort Study

The Millennium Cohort Study began in 2001 with an unprecedented goal: survey 140,000 service members for 21 years to examine their physical and psychological wellbeing in relation to their military experiences. After the Gulf War, service members expressed concern about the health effects of deployment. With support from Congress, the Institute of Medicine recommended that the Department of Defense implement a large prospective study to address the issue.

The Naval Health Research Center (NHRC)'s Military Population Health Directorate launched the Millennium Cohort Study to determine whether deployment-related exposures affected service members' health when they returned from military operations. HJF provides technical staff in support of NHRC in San Diego, in collaboration with investigators from USU and other institutions.

Over the past years, the study has surveyed more than 202,000 members of the U.S. military and spawned a partner study of the spouses and family of service members. The largest prospective health study in military history, its findings have been published in leading scientific journals and mainstream media outlets. In 2013, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs recognized the program's success and approved an extension of the study to 67 years, making it not only the largest study in military history, but also the longest.