

THE WALTER REED ARMY INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH

Military Psychiatry

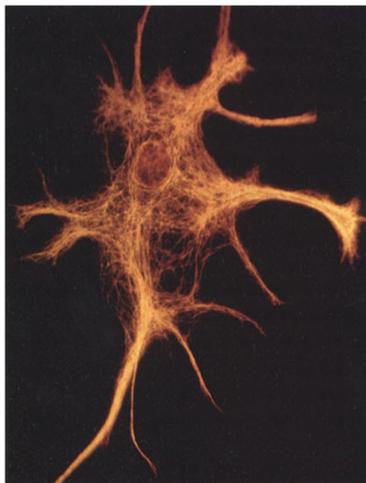
Investigators in this program apply the multifaceted techniques of social science and psychiatric research to understand and address the many global and day-to-day pressures of military life affecting what we label “mental health” or “psychological resilience.” In spite of their awkwardness, these and other similar phrases identify those features of each Warfighter’s emotional and behavioral persona that may be the most important factors determining military success or failure. Scientists in this program use the traditional methods of individual and small-group interview, standard and specialized psychological tests and surveys, and objective measures such as the rates of suicide, re-enlistment, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), to make wide-ranging assessments of soldier and military family health and to recommend changes to organization, training, and leadership.

Mission

- To provide knowledge and interventions to improve psychological functioning, reduce the impact of mental disorders, and enhance the resilience of Soldiers, Leaders, and Families.

US Army Medical Research Unit-Europe

An integral component of this effort is the partnership with the US Army Medical Research Unit-Europe (USAMRU-E), the laboratory at which much of the program’s field research is based, including support and evaluation of the Army’s Mental Health Advisory Teams (MHATs) and randomized trials of test instruments and candidate recommendations for change to doctrine.



Research Priorities:

- Lead Joint Mental Health Advisory Teams;
- Develop and validate a training model focused on small unit leaders designed to help leaders build resilience in their subordinates

Our expertise is in:

- Comprehensive survey-based mental health assessments for Army and DoD. Responsible for staffing and implementing in-theater Mental Health Advisory Teams (MHATs).
- Validating psychological resiliency programs.

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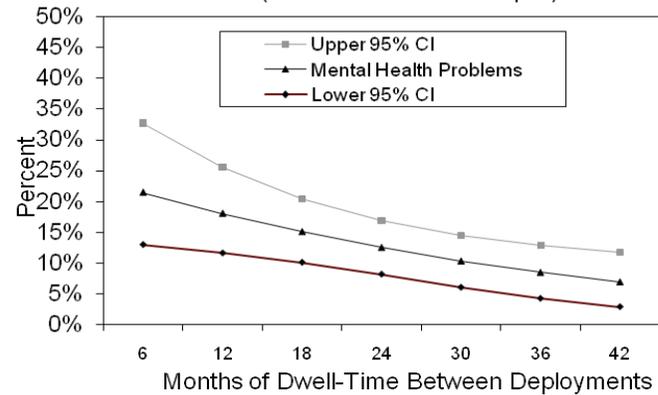
The scope of research challenges:

- Military life exerts significant demands on Service Members and their Families through repeated deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq and exposure to potential traumatic combat-related events.
- Alcohol misuse, aggression, and other health risk behaviors, and functional impairment are common among those with deployment experience.
- Sustaining optimal Service Member and Family behavioral health in this context is challenging and accurate data upon which to base policy decisions and develop interventions is often difficult to obtain.
- In order to maximize impact, research data needs to be quickly integrated into training and provided to senior leaders.

Our future directions include:

- Conducting experimental studies of resilience training programs
- Leading and staffing annual MHAT missions to deployed settings
- Refining diagnostic measures used in surveys to improve screening and treatment
- Developing new survey scales and statistical methods in order to best assess Service Member and Family needs to identify intervention points.

Sample-Adjusted Values for NCOs (Maneuver Unit Sample)



Major Accomplishments

- Lead agent for the Mental Health Advisory Teams (MHATs) to assess Service Member mental health status and behavioral health care delivery system in deployed settings.
- MHATs have resulted in numerous staffing, doctrine, and policy changes for the Medical Command and deployed forces. They are routinely briefed to senior DoD leaders and Congress
- Pioneering studies on the magnitude of combat-related mental health problems of over 100,000 Service Members conducted under the Land Combat Study protocols.
- Land Combat Study data led to numerous Army training and intervention efforts and numerous peer-reviewed publications
- Battlemind Training developed and validated. Implemented throughout the US Army and integrated into Comprehensive Soldier Fitness resilience plan.

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503 Robert Grant Avenue

Silver Spring, MD 20910

wrair-www.army.mil

Phone: 301-319-7105



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