

RRP 12-193

Interventions Online to Facilitate Post-War Access of Reserve and National Guard Servicewomen

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BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

OEF/OIF/OND RNG servicewomen are at significant risk for post-deployment mental health problems. However, only a minority of them seek needed care. Our prior work demonstrated that a web-based screening for common post-deployment adjustment conditions which generated a personalized educational intervention can be successfully implemented, and may reduce Veteran discomfort with seeking care. It was found to provide mental health information servicewomen reported they did not receive otherwise. These initial RRP findings, combined with methodological lessons learned during implementation, are the rationale for this new RRP to further refine, enhance, and maximize the intervention's likelihood for positive, efficient, and cost-effective system impact.

OBJECTIVE(S):

The long-term goal of this project is to improve RNG servicewomen's knowledge about their own post-deployment adjustment and improve their willingness to access VA mental health care as needed.

Specific Objective 1: To conduct qualitative focus groups at two sites with OEF/OIF/OND RNG female Veterans, not limited to VA enrolled, to elicit feedback on the current web-based intervention, identify possible barriers/facilitators to VA mental health services of both current and non-VA health care users, and use feedback to guide future revisions.

Specific Objective 2. Refine and pilot-test the revised web-based intervention in OEF/OIF/OND RNG female Veterans who may or may not be VA-enrolled to identify effective recruitment approaches for web-based screening, identify women's preferences for portability of their tailored results, and confirm web-based intervention increases servicewomen's knowledge about their post-deployment conditions, decreases mental health care stigma, facilitates entry into the VA for non-enrolled RNG servicewomen with health care needs, and lastly confirm pre and post intervention satisfaction and VA utilization through self-report and electronic record confirmation.

METHODS:

This research will use a mixed methods approach. The research team will partner with the HSR&D Women's Practice Based Research Network (PBRN) to extend the scope of what usually can be done in an RRP. Phase 1 focus groups will be held in Iowa City and Greater Los Angeles Health VA Health Care Centers to allow for diversity, e.g. rurality, race. VA enrolled women Veterans with a mental health

diagnosis of PTSD, depression, and/or substance abuse will be included. Phase 2 will use pre- and post-satisfaction and care surveys and the web-based intervention refined from Phase 1. The web-based screening and personalized psychoeducation will be implemented in the inaugural PBRN study states of Iowa, California, and North Carolina. Defense Manpower Data Center will provide us with a community sample of OEF/OIF/OND of currently or previously serving OEF/OIF/OND RNG Servicewomen returning from deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan within the 24 months preceding study participation.

FINDINGS/RESULTS:

None to date.

IMPACT:

This proposal is responsive to Mental Health-QUERI's strategic aim to develop and test innovative tools and strategies for enhancing access to and engagement with evidence-based treatments for mental health conditions that afflict our nation's newest Veterans. An online intervention tailored to individual's needs for specific services may provide an effective and relatively low cost approach to engage women early after returning from combat in an effort to mediate the severity of post-deployment mental health conditions, interrupt the cycle of chronicity found in many war veterans, blunt the development of multiple mental health co-morbidities, address family readjustment concerns, and facilitate self-initiated care seeking.

PUBLICATIONS:

None at this time.

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