

Fall 2019



CCDOR

Connection

Our Mission

To develop and evaluate interventions and implementation strategies to improve health care delivery, Veteran engagement in health care, and Veterans' health and functioning in their communities

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Associate Director: Brent Taylor, PhD



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CCDOR Highlights

- Amidst national concerns about vaping, the media has sought the expertise of **Anne Melzer**, CCDOR investigator and pulmonologist, about lung health and research on vaping.
- **Steve Fu's** research on proactive outreach for smoking cessation was featured as a University of Minnesota Research Brief last month.
- **In Remembrance: Frank Lederle's** May 30, 2019 *New England Journal of Medicine* article titled, "Open versus Endovascular Repair of Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm," was the Minneapolis VA Research Service featured research paper. The paper reports the long-term outcomes of people with abdominal aortic aneurysms who were randomized to either open or endovascular repair. To read more, visit <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1715955>.
- The VERDICT (Veterans Response to Dosage in Chiropractic Therapy) study, a \$7 million study funded by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health and the Office of Research on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health, will examine the role of chiropractic care in addressing pain without the use of pharmaceuticals. Led by the Palmer Center for Chiropractic Research, VERDICT is part of the federally-funded NIH-DoD-VA Pain Management Collaboratory. Minneapolis VA is a site for the study, with **Erin Krebs** as Site PI. The four-year study began in September. Read the press release at <https://www.palmer.edu/media-newsroom/>.
- **Nina Sayer's** HSR&D Research to Impact for Veterans (RIVR) proposal titled, "Promoting Effective, Routine, and Sustained Implementation of Stress Treatments 3.0 (PERSIST 3.0)" was funded. PERSIST 3.0 comes on the heels of PERSIST and PERSIST 2.0 that identified and facilitated change in system barriers to routine use of evidence-based psychotherapies (EBPs) for PTSD. PERSIST 3.0 aims to increase the reach of EBPs for PTSD nationally and reduce the number of PTSD clinics with low utilization of these treatments.



Anne Melzer, MD, MS
(Credit: April Eilers—Minneapolis VA Public Affairs)

In this Issue

- Highlights
- CCDOR leaders in lung health
- CCDOR research represented in *Women's Health Issues* supplement
- CCDOR Veteran engagement recognized
- Minneapolis VA Evidence-Synthesis Program
- Select Publications

Calendar

Implementation Science Journal Club—4th Tuesday of every month

Medicine Grand Rounds

Wei (Denise) Duan-Porter—Oct 18
Tim Wilt—Nov 5
Orly Vardeny Ni—Mar 6
Maureen Murdoch—Apr 10
Aasma Shaukat—Apr 24

Medicine Journal Club

Lauren Mitchell—Nov 7
Kris Ensrud—Dec 5
Susan Diem—Feb 6
Tim Wilt—Mar 5
Elisheva Danan—Apr 2

Medicine Research Conference

Erin Koffel—Oct 31
Anne Melzer—Jan 16
Steve Fu—Mar 19

CCDOR is a Leader in Promoting Lung Health

Dr. Anne Melzer has ongoing research to improve the quality of care for patients with lung diseases, particularly diseases that stem from smoking, and her expertise is often sought by VA and non-VA audiences. In the September 11 USA Today (<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2019/09/11/vaping-lung-illness-what-we-know-spate-cases-and-deaths/2264610001/>), **Dr. Melzer** spoke about lung illness and the recent concerns about e-cigarette use (aka vaping). A recent spike in lung-related illnesses and deaths across the country suspected to be related to vaping has led to a nationwide investigation. In the article, Dr. Melzer spoke about why substances in the lungs are harmful, including those found in e-cigarettes, and the symptoms of lung illness. On October 9, USA Today published a follow-up article featuring a point-counterpoint discussion on vaping research (<https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/health/2019/10/09/vaping-safer-than-smoking-studies->



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Connection

CCDOR is a Leader in Promoting Lung Health cont'd

[differ-lung-injury-cases-rise/3821982002/](#)). Dr. Melzer was called on again for her expertise. She challenged a study that suggested vaping is more effective in helping cigarette smokers quit than nicotine replacement therapies. Dr. Melzer finds other forums to spread the word about lung health. She recently gave a speech about lung cancer screening and treatment titled, "A Message of Hope: The Changing World of Lung Cancer Treatment," at the *A Breath of Hope* run/walk.

Tam Do, CCDOR research nurse, is the Associate Program Director for VISN 23 Lung Cancer Screening (LCS) program. As Associate Director, Ms. Do works closely with national and VISN-level teams to provide LCS implementation training. She and her team traveled to 5 VA sites this summer and have implemented LCS at least a dozen VAs. With support from VISN 23 LCS Pro-

gram Director Angela Fabbrini, Ms. Do manages 2,026 patients for the local LCS program at the Minneapolis VA. The goal of LCS is to detect early stages of lung cancer and decrease stage IV lung cancer.

Dr. Steve Fu's National Cancer Institute-funded study on proactive outreach for smoking cessation was published in *Addiction* in September. The paper, co-authored by **David Nelson, Barb Clothier** and **Pat Hammett** discussed the long-term cost-effectiveness of the OPT-IN proactive tobacco cessation outreach program for adult smokers. The paper caught the eye of the University of Minnesota, and was featured as a research brief (<https://twin-cities.umn.edu/news-events/research-brief-proactively-offering-smokers-free-treatment-quit-smoking-cost-effective>). For more details about the study, visit [Addiction](#).

Women's Health Issues Supplement Features CCDOR Research

The June *Women's Health Issues* supplement, [Examining Sex/Gender Differences in Veterans Affairs Research](#) was sponsored by the Cooperative Studies Program of the Veterans Health Administration (VA) Office of Research and Development and examines sex and gender differences in U.S. veterans' health conditions and responses to treatments. **Dr. Wei (Denise) Duan-Porter**, CCDOR investigator, was a guest editor and co-authored two of the papers. "Accelerating the growth of evidence-based care for women and men Veterans" provided an overview of the supplement. "Enrollment and retention of men and women in health services research and development trials" examined the enrollment of men and women in VA health services research trials, finding 8 trials that began recruitment between 2011 and 2014. Only one trial purposefully attempted to increase recruitment of women. The study found that women participated in these trials at similar or greater rates than men.

Two studies in the supplement were led by CCDOR investigator **Dr. Elisheva Danan**. "Evidence map: Reporting of results by sex or gender in randomized, controlled trials with women Veteran participants (2008 to 2018)," which included co-authors **Kristen Ullman** and **Dr. Erin Krebs**, extended a previous evidence map by

reviewing randomized controlled trials (RCTs) with women veterans from 2008 to 2018. The review yielded 45 unique RCTs; however, only 10 reported results by sex or gender. The authors concluded that results reported by sex or gender in Veteran trials is infrequent even though participation of women Veterans in research continues to increase. They make recommendations at the funding, journal and investigator levels that can improve the quality of sex/gender-based reporting of study results. In the paper, "Smoking cessation among female and male veterans before and after a randomized trial of proactive outreach," Dr. Danan and colleagues, including **Barb Clothier, Dr. Diana Burgess, Dr. Siamak Noorbaloochi** and **Dr. Steve Fu**, compared baseline experiences with smoking cessation care in VA for men and women and assessed gender differences in patient responses to a proactive outreach intervention. Post hoc subgroup analyses showed that women were less likely than men to be satisfied with VA's smoking cessation care. Both men and women demonstrated prolonged abstinence one-year following participation in the proactive intervention, but the change in women was not statistically significant. The study shows that proactively targeting smoking can be effective for men and women.

CCDOR Veteran Engagement Recognized

VA HSR&D's publication *Veterans' Perspectives* highlights efforts that emphasize the impact of Veterans on research – and the impact of research on Veterans. For the September issue, HSR&D Center for Information Dissemination and Education Resources (CIDER) reached out to CCDOR to feature its Veteran Engagement Workgroup (ViEW) and other Veteran Engagement efforts. Led by **Dr. Laura Meis**, ViEW uses different models to bring together researchers and community members, including broad and study-specific Veteran panels. ViEW hosts community engagement studios—structured meetings between researchers and community members with 'lived experience' that is relevant to researchers' projects such that the members can engage in the research process and provide valuable feedback. ViEW is currently recruiting Veterans to become members of additional groups, including one focused on PTSD and another focus on issues related to women Veterans.

Individual projects led by CCDOR investigators also

use different models of Veteran Engagement. In the Spring 2019 issue of this newsletter, CCDOR featured Veteran engagement work conducted by **Dr. Erin Krebs** and the Veterans' Pain Care Organizational Improvement Comparative Effectiveness (VOICE) study team and **Drs. Melissa Polusny** and **Chris Erbes's** Advancing Research on Mechanisms of Resilience (ARMOR) study. The Learning to Apply Mindfulness to Pain (LAMP) study, led by **Dr. Diana Burgess**, is delivering an adapted mindfulness intervention via mobile devices to Veterans with chronic pain. LAMP has its own Veteran Engagement Panel (VEP) that includes men and women Veterans from different eras of service who experience chronic pain. LAMP VEP members have provided important input on the intervention components, strategies for optimizing adherence to the intervention and other aspects of the study. Read more about CCDOR's meaningful and critical engagement of Veterans in [Veterans' Perspectives](#).

Minneapolis VA Evidence-Synthesis Program Reports

Dr. Tim Wilt and the Minneapolis VA ESP Program conducted systematic reviews that were featured as VA HSR&D Management eBriefs. **Dr. Nancy Greer** led the team in a review that examined the available evidence on the benefits and harms of participation in adaptive sports programs, as well as the barriers to and facilitators of participation. "Adaptive sports" is used to describe a sport that has been adapted or created specifically for persons with a disability. Some key findings include:

- Evidence for the effectiveness of adaptive sports programs is largely from studies of Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapies in select individuals with PTSD, multiple sclerosis, or stroke/cerebrovascular accident.
- Barriers to participation were mainly related to physical environmental factors (e.g., cost, accessibility). Personal barriers included fear of injury or pain, lack of time, and low self-esteem.
- Facilitators of participation included social factors

(e.g., social contacts, participation in society, interaction with others with similar disabilities) and personal beliefs (e.g., improved health/fitness).

Dr. Wei (Denise) Duan-Porter led an examination of the evidence on modifiable risk factors for long-term nursing home placement and interventions that aim to delay long-term nursing home placement for community-dwelling adults with physical and/or cognitive impairments. The review found that the risk of nursing home placement is complex. Factors such as frailty and functional impairments contribute to the risk. Case management, caregiver support, and preventive home visits showed no benefit overall for delaying or preventing long-term nursing home placement across studies; however, a few models of these interventions at a high intensity may delay long-term placement. Dr. Porter and the team discussed policy implications for VA and suggest specific strategies based on the findings.



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Select CCDOR Publications

Melzer AC, Golden SE, Wiener RS, Iaccarino JM, Slatore CG. A Brief Report of Smoking Behaviors in Patients with Incidental Pulmonary Nodules: Associations with Communication and Risk Perception. *Tobacco use insights*. 2019 Apr;12:1179173X19839059.

Thao V, Nyman JA, **Nelson DB**, Joseph AM, **Clothier B**, **Hammett PJ**, **Fu SS**. Cost-effectiveness of population-level proactive tobacco cessation outreach among socio-economically disadvantaged smokers: evaluation of a randomized control trial. *Addiction*. 2019 Sep 4.

Danan ER, Sherman SE, **Clothier BA**, **Burgess DJ**, Pinsker EA, Joseph AM, **Noorbaloochi S**, **Fu SS**. Smoking cessation among female and male veterans before and after a randomized trial of proactive outreach. *Women's Health Issues*. 2019 Jun 25;29:S15-23.

Danan ER, **Ullman K**, Klap RS, Yano EM, **Krebs EE**. Evidence Map: Reporting of Results by Sex or Gender in Randomized, Controlled Trials with Women Veteran Participants (2008 to 2018). *Women's Health Issues*. 2019 Jun 25;29:S112-20.

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Goldstein KM, Bastian LA, **Duan-Porter W**, Gray KE, Hoggatt KJ, Kelly MM, Wilson SM, Humphreys K, Klap R, Yano EM, Huang GD. Accelerating the Growth of Evidence-Based Care for Women and Men Veterans. *Women's Health Issues*. 2019 Jun 25;29:S2-5.

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Hammett PJ, **Nelson D**, **Burgess DJ**, **Fu SS**, Pinsker EA. Population Smoking Characteristics and Cessation Be-

haviors in a Nationally Representative Cohort of Hispanic Veterans and Hispanic Non-Veterans. *Military medicine*. 2019 May 8.

Murdoch M, **Kehle-Forbes S**, **Spoont M**, **Sayer NA**, **Noorbaloochi S**, Arbisi P. Changes in Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Service Connection Among Veterans Under Age 55: An 18-Year Ecological Cohort Study. *Military medicine*. 2019 Apr 2.

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Connection

CCDOR was founded in 1998 and is currently comprised of 26 Core Investigators (includes clinically-active physicians, biostatisticians, epidemiologists, behavioral scientists, and clinical psychologists) and over 50 Research and Administrative Support Staff. It supports over 70 funded studies and several research training programs for post-doctoral level Investigators.

Center of Innovation

In 2013, CCDOR became a VA Center of Innovation (COIN) and was refunded in 2018. The COIN program rewards research innovations and partnerships to ensure that research has the greatest possible impact on VHA policies, healthcare practices, and health outcomes for Veterans. COINs emphasize detailed strategic planning and collaboration in one or more focused areas of research, partnerships with VA clinical and/or operations leaders, and accelerated movement toward implementation and impact.

CCDOR's Research Priorities

- Trauma Recovery
- Chronic Pain and Opioid Harms Reduction

CCDOR's Cores

- Administrative Core
- Evidence Synthesis Core
- Implementation Core
- Mentoring and Training Core
- Statistics and Data Management Core
- Veteran Engagement Core

Operational Partners

- National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP)
- National Center for PTSD
- Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
- VA Midwest Health Care Network, VISN 23
- VA Primary Care Program Office
- VHA Pain Management (Program Office)

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VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration