

*Spring 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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**Director:** Steven Fu, MD, MSCE    **Deputy Director:** Nina Sayer, PhD LP

**Associate Director:** Brent Taylor, PhD



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### CCDOR Highlights

- **Erin Krebs's** JAMA paper, "Effect of Opioid vs Nonopioid Medications on Pain-Related Function in Patients with Chronic Back Pain or Hip or Knee Osteoarthritis Pain: The SPACE Randomized Clinical Trial," received the HSR&D Best Research Paper Award for 2018!
- **Laura Meis's** paper, "Sticking It Out in Trauma-Focused Treatment for PTSD: It Takes a Village" from her VA/Department of Defense-funded *Project Homefront*, was selected by David Atkins, HSR&D Director, for an HSR&D Publication Brief!
- **Timothy Wilt** was named Chair of the American College of Physicians Clinical Guidelines Committee (ACP-CGC) for the second time! ACP is the largest medical specialty society in the world with 150,000+ members. The CGC is comprised of about 16 physician and public members selected from around the world. As Chair, Dr. Wilt will continue to oversee and lead in the direction and development of ACP-CGC methods, policies, and recommendations.
- On February 5th, the HSR&D Cyberseminar Spotlight on Pain Management featured the battlefield acupuncture for pain project, one of four projects within the QUERI/Office of Patient-Centered Care & Cultural Transformation-funded Complementary and Integrative Health Evaluation Center (PI: Stephanie Taylor, GLA VA). Dr. Taylor along with **Princess Ackland**, Steve Zeliadt and Karleen Giannitrapani presented findings from the project for the cyberseminar, which had over 425 attendees!
- **Elisheva Danan** was one of four winners of the 2018 Network Director's Network Star Awards for VISN 23! The program recognizes strong practices at the facility level across the VISN and serve as a means for broader application of these practices within the larger network. This year, there were 32 strong practices submitted for consideration. Dr. Danan, along with **Erin Krebs** and colleagues, was the winner for the Outpatient Clinical Process category for her innovation, "Comprehensive Improvement of Cervical Cancer Screening & Follow-up."



Laura Meis, PhD  
(Credit: April Eilers—  
Minneapolis VA Public Affairs)

### In this Issue

- Highlights
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- Veteran Engagement in CCDOR Research
- Minneapolis VA Evidence-based Synthesis Program
- Select Publications

### Calendar

Implementation Science Journal Club—4th Tuesday of every month

Minneapolis VA Research Day—  
May 1

Medicine Journal Club (presenter:  
Brent Taylor)—May 2

Medicine Grand Rounds (presenter:  
Erin Koffel)—May 10

Memorial Day—May 27

Medicine Journal Club (presenter:  
Steve Fu)—Jun 6

Medicine Grand Rounds (presenter:  
Erin Krebs)—Jun 14

Independence Day—Jul 4

Labor Day—Sep 2

## "It Takes a Village"—Project Homefront Recognized

**Dr. Laura Meis's** VA/Department of Defense (DoD) *Project Homefront* study, which was featured on the DoD's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs website in 2016, has received national recognition yet again—as a VA HSR&D Publication Brief. Trauma-focused treatments for PTSD result in meaningful symptom relief for many Veterans. However, one in three Veterans are likely to drop out from these interventions before completing them. *Project Homefront* aimed to understand how families influence Veterans' use of trauma-focused treatments for PTSD. Dr. Meis and her team surveyed 272 Veterans and a loved one of their choice as Veterans began a trauma-focused therapy for PTSD across four different VA hospitals. Loved ones included romantic partners, friends, and family members. The study found that Veterans were twice as likely to remain in a trauma-focused treatment when a loved one encouraged them to face their distress. The importance of this encouragement by loved ones persisted even after considering other important factors such as the severity of Veterans' symptoms, Veteran attitudes about

## “It Takes a Village”—Project Homefront Recognized cont’d

treatment, and the quality of Veterans’ relationships with their therapists. Findings suggest that mental health providers should determine if Veterans entering trauma-focused treatments have encouragement by a loved one to participate. Veterans may benefit from provider efforts to promote family support for trauma-focused care. Further work is needed to deepen our understanding of how loved ones can help Veterans in their efforts to recover from PTSD. Dr. Meis and her team published the findings in the March issue of the [Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology](#).

## Veteran Engagement in CCDOR Research

CCDOR established its Veteran Engagement Core to develop and lead Center activities such as studios and panels, to gather Veteran input in CCDOR projects. Chaired by Dr. Laura Meis, the CCDOR Veteran Engagement Core includes three additional investigators—Drs. Wei (Denise) Duan-Porter, Steve Fu (CCDOR Director), and Erin Krebs—and four staff, one of whom is a Veteran. Together, the Core has developed expertise in community engagement and Community Based Participatory Research. After a one year pilot period, this Core adapted a novel, best-practices approach to patient engagement referred to as Veteran Engagement Studios (Joosten et al., 2015). This model tailors community-expert groups to the project of interest, and is especially suited to facilitate deep and meaningful input. The Core has conducted six Veteran Engagement Studios to date. It has also partnered with local investigators to weave comprehensive plans for stakeholder engagement into three newly-funded and two ongoing studies.

Beyond the Core, CCDOR investigators have integrated Veteran engagement in unique ways. These unique models not only serve the specific needs of each project, but also establish a strong platform from which CCDOR can expand its Veteran engagement activities.

### VOICE

**Dr. Erin Krebs’s** PCORI-funded study (VOICE) has a 10-member Veteran Engagement Panel. Agnes Jensen, VOICE project manager and Navy Veteran, was interviewed about using patient advisors in the VOICE trial to enhance the research process. She shares examples such as having the patient advisors serve as the authors for study welcome letters to connect to participants and using patient advisors to help develop patient-centered educational materials for the study. The interviews can be found at <https://youtu.be/R8rWpkVed8Y> and <https://youtu.be/l-luxam8LVs>.

### ARMOR

**Drs. Melissa Polusny and Chris Erbes** are conducting the “Advancing Research on Mechanisms of Resilience (ARMOR): Prospective Longitudinal Adaptation in New Military Recruits” study. It is a 4-year National Institute of Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) UG3/UH3 Phase Innovation Awards Cooperative Agreement study to develop a comprehensive dynamic model of resilience in National Guard recruits. To combat low response rates experienced during the UG3 pilot phase of the study, Drs. Polusny and Erbes have adapted the EVMC model—Engagement, Verification, Maintenance and Confirmation—to increase participant engagement and retention in the UH3 study phase. This 4-phased model is designed to (a) proactively maintain contact with participants, (b) quickly identify inaccurate locating information, and (c) allow adequate time to locate difficult-to-track participants prior to data collection. Below are examples of activities from ARMOR for each phase:

Phase	Example Activity
<b>Engagement</b>	⇒ Participant completes Locator Form that includes detailed contact information (e.g., email, Basic Training ship date, 3 alternate contacts)
<b>Verification</b>	⇒ Verification email sent to verify accuracy of email address
<b>Maintenance</b>	⇒ Text message before participant ships for Basic Training sending well wishes from the ARMOR study team
<b>Confirmation</b>	⇒ Personalized prenotification letter and email sent one week prior to survey link distribution to remind participants of their commitment to the project

## Minneapolis VA ESP's Work is Far-Reaching

In FY2018, the QUERI-funded Evidence-based Synthesis Program (ESP) at the Minneapolis VA, led by CCDOR investigator **Dr. Tim Wilt**, had 4 of the top 10 most cited ESP publications of all time—the most of any of the four ESP centers!! This was discovered through a citation analysis of the Scopus database conducted by the ESP Coordinating Center to assess the impact and reach of ESP publications within peer-reviewed medical literature. The four publications from the Minneapolis team were:

- ◇ Carlson KF, Kehle SM, Meis LA, Greer N, MacDonald R, Rutks I, Sayer NA, Dobscha SK, Wilt TJ. Prevalence, assessment, and treatment of mild traumatic brain injury and posttraumatic stress disorder: a systematic review of the evidence. *The Journal of head trauma rehabilitation*. 2011;26(2):103-15.
- ◇ Drekonja D, Reich J, Gezahegn S, Greer N, Shaukat A, MacDonald R, Rutks I, Wilt TJ. Fecal microbiota transplantation for *Clostridium difficile* infection: a systematic review. *Annals of internal medicine*. 2015;162(9):630-8.
- ◇ Bloomfield HE, Krause A, Greer N, Taylor BC, MacDonald R, Rutks I, Reddy P, Wilt TJ. Meta-analysis: effect of patient self-testing and self-management of long-term anticoagulation on major clinical outcomes. *Annals of internal medicine*. 2011;154(7):472-82.
- ◇ Warshaw EM, Hillman YJ, Greer NL, Hagel EM, MacDonald R, Rutks IR, Wilt TJ. Tele dermatology for diagnosis and management of skin conditions: a systematic review. *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*. 2011;64(4):759-72.

The quality of the Minneapolis VA ESP team has also caught the attention of local media. In 2018, the Minneapolis team was invited to submit an article that highlights its work to the *Minnesota Physician*, a monthly journal that is mailed to all physicians licensed in Minnesota. Led by **Dr. Wei (Denise) Duan-Porter**, Associate Director of the Minneapolis VA ESP and CCDOR investigator, the team summarized its work and impact over the last 20+ years as well as challenges and opportunities faced by evidence synthesis teams. The full article can be found in the February 2019 issue: [https://issuu.com/mppub/docs/mp\\_0219\\_web](https://issuu.com/mppub/docs/mp_0219_web).

This fiscal year, the Minneapolis team continues to produce high-demand reports that lead to quality publications. Led by **Dr. Nancy Greer**, the team conducted a review to examine differences in the prevalence, severity and persistence of psychiatric conditions in service members and Veterans with and without deployment-related mild traumatic brain injury, and the effectiveness and harms of treatments for psychiatric conditions in service members and Veterans with a history of deployment-related mTBI. The report led to two peer-reviewed publications led by **Drs. Greer and Princess Ackland**, an HSR&D Cyberseminar (Greer et al., 2018) and an HSR&D Management Brief. Dr. Greer and the team also conducted the “Adaptive Sports for Disabled Veterans” review on the evidence on the benefits and harms of adaptive sports participation for Veterans with various disabilities and the facilitators and barriers to participation in adaptive sports by these individuals. The report also led to a Management Brief and publications are in development. The Minneapolis team is already working on its next review.



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## Select CCDOR Publications

**Meis LA, Noorbaloochi S, Hagel Campbell EM, Erbes CR, Polusny MA, Velasquez TL, Bangerter A, Cutting A, Eftekhari A, Rosen CS, Tuerk PW.** Sticking it out in trauma-focused treatment for PTSD: It takes a village. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. 2019;87(3):246-256.

Rogers E, **Fu S**, Krebs P, **Noorbaloochi S, Nugent S, Gravely A**, Sherman S. Proactive tobacco treatment for smokers using VA mental health clinics. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 2018;54(5):620-629.

**Ackland PE, Greer N, Sayer NA, Spont MR, Taylor B**, MacDonald R, McKenzie L, Rosebush C, **Wilt TJ**. Effectiveness and Harms of Mental Health Treatments in Service Members and Veterans with Deployment-Related Mild Traumatic Brain Injury. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. 2019.

Fink HA, MacDonald R, Forte ML, Rosebush CE, **Ensrud KE**, Schousboe JT, Nelson VA, **Ullman K**, Butler M, Olson CM, **Taylor BC**, Brasure M, **Wilt TJ**. Long-Term Drug Therapy and Drug Discontinuations and Holidays for Osteoporosis Fracture Prevention: A Systematic Review. *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 2019.

Widome R, **Jensen A, Bangerter A, Fu SS**. Food insecurity among veterans of the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. *Public health nutrition*. (5):844-9.

**Murdoch M, Kehle-Forbes S, Spont 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.

Hanson KT, Carlson KF, Friedemann-Sanchez G, **Meis LA**, Van Houtven CH, **Jensen AC**, Phelan SM, Griffin

JM. Family caregiver satisfaction with inpatient rehabilitation care. *PloS one*. 2019;14(3):e0213767.

**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;12:1179173X19839059.

Wyse JJ, Ganzini L, Dobscha SK, **Krebs EE**, Morasco BJ. Setting Expectations, Following Orders, Safety, and Standardization: Clinicians' Strategies to Guide Difficult Conversations About Opioid Prescribing. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 2019:1-7.

Kytömaa S, Hegde S, Claggett B, Udell JA, Rosamond W, Temte J, Nichol K, Wright JD, Solomon SD, **Vardeny O**. Association of Influenza-like Illness Activity With Hospitalizations for Heart Failure: The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Study. *JAMA cardiology*. 2019.

**Koffel E, Amundson E, Polusny G**, Wisdom JP. "You're Missing Out on Something Great": Patient and Provider Perspectives on Increasing the Use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia. *Behavioral sleep medicine*. 2019 Mar 25:1-4.

Dahm P, **Wilt T**. In early prostate cancer, radical prostatectomy reduced mortality more than watchful waiting at 23 years. *Annals of internal medicine*. 2019 Apr;170(8):JC44-.

Hart A, Bruin M, Chu S, Matas A, **Partin MR**, Israni AK. Decision support needs of kidney transplant candidates regarding the deceased donor waiting list: A qualitative study and conceptual framework. *Clinical transplantation*. 2019 Mar 13:e13530.

Frankfurt S, Frazier P, Litz BT, Schnurr PP, Orazem RJ, Gravely A, **Sayer N**. Online expressive writing intervention for reintegration difficulties among veterans: Who is most likely to benefit?. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*. 2019.

Davis LL, Resnick SG, Maieritsch KP, Weber KC, **Erbes CR**, Strom TQ, McCall KP, Kyriakides TC. Employment outcomes from VA vocational services involving transitional work for veterans with a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder. *Psychiatric rehabilitation journal*. 2019.

Nicolle LE, Gupta K, Bradley SF, Colgan R, DeMuri GP, **Drekonja D**, Eckert LO, Geerlings SE, Köves B, Hooton TM, Juthani-Mehta M. Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Asymptomatic Bacteriuria: 2019 Update by the Infectious Diseases Society of America. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. 2019.

**Murdoch M**, Jonk Y. Veterans' Health Care Utilization in Department of Veterans Affairs Facilities Two to Twelve Years after Applying for PTSD Service Connection: Findings from a Nationally Representative Cohort.

Chrouser KL, **Partin MR**. Intraoperative Disruptive Behavior: The Medical Student's Perspective. *Journal of Surgical Education*. 2019 Apr 25.

**Greer N, Sayer NA, Spont M, Taylor BC, Ackland PE**, MacDonald R, McKenzie L, Rosebush C, **Wilt TJ**. Prevalence and Severity of Psychiatric Disorders and Suicidal Ideation in Service Members and Veterans with and without Traumatic Brain Injury: Systematic Review. *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*. Epub ahead of print April 25, 2019.



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**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)

#### **For more information**

Minneapolis VA Healthcare System  
One Veterans Drive (152)  
Minneapolis, MN 55417  
Phone: 612-467-1979  
Fax: 612-727-5699

Email: [visn23ccdor@va.gov](mailto:visn23ccdor@va.gov)

Web: <https://www.ccdor.research.va.gov/>

**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration