



“WRAIR Forward”

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SPECIAL ISSUE: PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING

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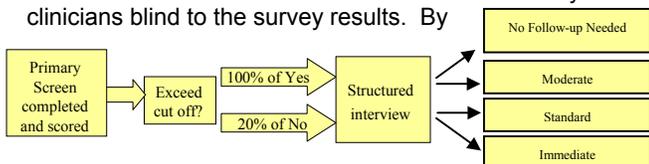
COMMANDER'S CORNER

Soldiers are resilient. As part of the psychological screening of Soldiers returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), I have been talking to Soldiers and reading comments they wrote about events they experienced in Iraq. Many Soldiers experienced intense events; nonetheless, our research shows that the majority of Soldiers reintegrate from deployments with few or no problems - many, in fact, report that the deployment has had a positive impact on them. That said, we estimate that somewhere between five and fifteen percent of soldiers may have problems reintegrating. Often problems stem from multiple, intersecting factors such as exposure to traumatic events coupled with relationship or alcohol problems. The goal of the Psychological Screening Program, the focus of this special issue of the *WRAIR Forward*, is to identify Soldiers for whom re-integration will be difficult and link them with mental health services. Overall, by conducting screening, we strive to enhance an already resilient force.

-MAJ Paul D. Bliese

OIF Soldiers Screened in 3 Studies: Data Collected for Validation

Efforts at validating the psychological screening program took a major step forward this quarter with the completion of three critical psychological screening missions. In each case, the goal has been to compare results from a screening survey with results from a structured interview conducted by clinicians blind to the survey results. By



making sure the interviewers are not biased by the survey results, the interview outcomes can be used to develop a more effective screening survey that has relevant content and the most appropriate cut-off scores. In addition to improving the content and validity of the survey, interviewing a percentage of soldiers not exceeding criteria on the primary screen is a new procedure designed to reduce the potential stigma of being selected for an interview (see figure). Delivering a short and effective screening instrument is a fundamental component of USAMRU-E's scientific and technology objective (STO-W).

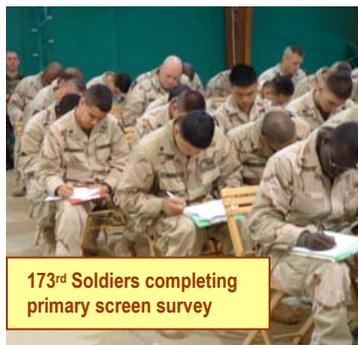
Post-Deployment Screening: the 173rd ABN BDE

Is psychological screening an effective and efficient way to assess soldiers after



MAJ Bliese briefing 173rd Soldiers

they've spent a year in Iraq? Soldiers from the 173rd ABN BDE had a chance to test out the system when the USAMRU-E fielded a team in Vicenza, Italy to augment the



173rd Soldiers completing primary screen survey

existing reintegration program at the request of the SETAF senior leadership. A total of 1,604 soldiers were screened, 601 were interviewed (22.3% of whom were randomly selected and 15.1% of whom were selected based on their survey answers exceeding established criteria). In

all, 101 (6.2%) Soldiers were referred for a standard follow-up evaluation and four Soldiers (0.25%) were sent for a same-day evaluation.

The USAMRU-E team included MAJ Bliese [Team Leader], Dr. Wright, SGT Carr [Team NCOIC], SPC Sinclair, Ms. Prayner, Ms. Salvi and SPC Pineau



Survey scoring on-site

(from LRMC) for the entire three weeks (18 days of reintegration processing); Dr. Adler (USAMRU-E) and COL Henderson (ERMC) assisted in the first half of the data collection; and a WRAIR team from DC (COL Milliken, SPC Bailey, and SPC Schanklin) assisted



Interview booths for secondary screen (built & provided courtesy of 22nd ASG)

in the second half of the data collection. Screening results were then briefed to MG Turner, Commander, SETAF, by MAJ Bliese, Dr. Wright and COL Milliken (11 MAR 04).

Following the mission, a recognition ceremony

was held in Heidelberg for team members in which COL Jones, Deputy Commander of ERMC, thanked unit members for their work (24 MAR 04). LTC (P) Trotta, Commander, Vicenza Health Clinic, also recognized the team with Certificates of Appreciation.



Dr. Wright interviewing Soldier as part of secondary screen

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Coordination with the 173rd: Two coordination trips to Vicenza immediately preceded psychological screening with 173rd Soldiers. Dr. Adler and CPT Thomas briefed COL Drummer, 22nd ASG Commander, and met with clinic staff as part of the initial coordination (5 FEB 04). Dr. Adler and SGT Carr also participated in a walk through with the entire SETAF reintegration team for Mr. Hall, Director of the Installation Management Agency (IMA) Europe Office (12 FEB 04).

Pre-Deployment Screening: 2nd BDE, 1ID

In order to develop a validated screening survey, screening research must be conducted at both pre-deployment and post-deployment because the same clinical scales may have different levels of relevance depending on the phase in the deployment cycle. Thus, when LTC Chevallier, Commander, 1-4 CAV, requested support for screening Soldiers about to deploy for a year in Iraq as part of OIF-2, USAMRU-E was once again able to conduct a research mission while supporting Division Mental Health services (20 -22 JAN 04). Screenings were conducted in Schweinfurt, Germany using the same procedure as with the 173rd: both Soldiers exceeding criteria and a percentage of those not exceeding criteria were interviewed. Overall, 760 Soldiers were screened, 86% of whom were assessed as having no signs of distress, 7.2% of whom had moderate levels of distress (but were regarded as sub-clinical), 6.1% of whom were referred, and 0.7% of whom were assessed as needing a same-day referral. Reliability checks were also included in that a second clinician filled out the interview form to assess the consistency of the interview process. The screening team consisted of 1ID Division Psychologist, CPT Johnson, and his staff of 91Xs: SGT Keith, SPC Stevenson, and SPC Dobbins. USAMRU-E staff included MAJ Bliese, CPT Thomas, Dr. Wright, Dr. Adler, SGT Carr, SPC Sinclair, and Ms. Bellis.



CPT Thomas scoring surveys



SPC Sinclair & SPC Stevenson reviewing ing procedures

Post-Deployment Screening: VCA

A third psychological screening study ended this quarter following 8 months of data collection with V Corps Artillery Soldiers returning from OIF in small groups over the course of many months beginning in July 2003. In all, 70 Soldiers were screened and all of them were interviewed, regardless of primary screen results. This procedure allowed USAMRU-E staff a chance to fine tune the interview and survey instruments.

IN OTHER NEWS:

Enhancing Leadership Skills

A new research initiative designed to supports the unit's STO- W research program by advancing leadership and sleep performance as potential interventions that may improve unit well-being, performance, and leader behavior was approved this quarter by the Human Use Research

Committee and the Office of Research Management at the WRAIR (20 FEB 04). Plans regarding this effort and the replication of the Debriefing study on a combat deployment were briefed to 1st Infantry Division senior leadership. MAJ Bliese and CPT Thomas (USAMRU-E) together with LTC Castro and CPT (P) McGurk from the Division of Neuroscience, WRAIR, briefed 1ID senior leadership on these studies in Würzburg (27-28 JAN 04):

- COL Kamena, CofS, 1ID
- COL Wentz, CDR, 1ID DISCOM
- LTC Shappell, G-1, 1ID
- LTC Brumage, Division Surgeon, 1ID

Although 1ID approval was obtained to conduct the studies, later operational concerns resulted in the goal of executing the Leadership Study part of the plan with another Division.

Thomas, J.L., & Bliese, P.D. (2004). The effects of sleep management and feedback on leader and unit health and performance. Walter Reed Army Institute of Research Protocol #1095. Forest Glenn, MD: WRAIR.

Debriefing Amendment

An amendment was approved for the Debriefing Study's implementation with soldiers deployed to Iraq as part of a coordinated effort with the 1st Infantry Division. The amendment was approved on 23 FEB 04 (protocol #862).

Physio Vests and Applied Research

Experts in the field of psychophysiological stress responses visited the unit to coordinate research plans for specialized vests that support non-invasive measurement of a wide range of stress responses. Dr. Johannes (German Space Agency) and Mr. Fisher (Spacebit GmbH) (29-30 JAN 04) discussed the potential applications of their physiological measurement system. Dr. Myerhoff, Division of Neuroscience, WRAIR, discussed the potential for these vests to be integrated into a research paradigm involving expert driver's training (28-30 JAN 04).

LTC (ret) Gary Allen, US Army Liaison Officer with the German Federal Office of Defense Technology and Procurement and Teresa Young, US Embassy, Berlin, then met with the Commander of USAMRU-E to discuss the development of a formal international agreement to facilitate international scientific exchange (19 MAR 04).

USAMRU-E Distinguished Guests

- Joachim Dejonckheere, Free University of Brussels (Dutch), visited the unit (26 Jan 04), to discuss the use of multi-level modeling in stress research with MAJ Bliese.
- CPT Melba Stetz, Assistant Director, RAD III, MRMC, visited the unit (23-25 MAR 04) to discuss the unit's latest research activities.

Scientists on the Move

- MAJ Bliese and CPT Thomas attended the MRMC Command conference in Baltimore MD (9-12 FEB 04) followed by two days of meetings and coordination with WRAIR personnel (12-13 FEB 04).
- CPT Thomas worked on writing projects with Dr. Grojean, Aston University, Birmingham, UK, (4-6 FEB 04).

Personnel Updates

- Ms. Kelley Rice, a contractor with CACI, began working as a research associate on 26 MAR 04.

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Commander, USAMRU-E
Editor

MAJ Paul D. Bliese
Amy B. Adler, Ph.D.