Presentation 8b – Karen Quigley

Prospective Study of Functional Status in Veterans at Risk for Medically Unexplained Symptoms

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Objectives

- 1. To determine prospectively the pre-deployment and immediate post-deployment risk factors (such as trait negative emotionality and prior trauma) that predict later medically unexplained symptoms (MUS) and poor functional status
- 2. To determine prospectively the pre-deployment and immediate post-deployment resilience factors (such as coping style and social support) that predict later medically unexplained symptoms (MUS) and poor functional status
- 3. To improve on previous design problems (recall bias, selection bias and lack of effective baselines) in studies of MUS

Preliminary Results

- •Finishing a pilot study (currently 14 subjects tested) to determine the feasibility of and time required for the self-report and physiological measures (reactive salivary cortisol and cardiac autonomic function)
- •Developed a computer program that presents all questionnaires to the subject for direct data entry via a mouse & keyboard
- •Developed an Access database (including automated data import and report generation) for all self-report variables

Experimental Plan

- Prospective, longitudinal observational study
- *Predictors: Negative emotionality, dissociative tendencies, social support, coping skills, current symptoms, cortisol and cardiac autonomic stress reactivity (to a 14 minute combined mental/physical stressor)
- •Outcomes: SF-36 Mental and Physical Component Summary scores, healthcare utilization, chronic multisymptom illness status (using CDC case definition)
- •Controls: Prior trauma, PTSD symptoms, current distress, body mass index, prior environmental exposures, age, gender, education