

Presentation 12 – Drew Helmer

Provider Effect on Outpatient Utilization
in Veterans with Symptoms

Health Services Research Career
Development Award
Drew A. Helmer, MD, MS

Goal

- Improve quality of care for veterans with deployment-related health concerns

Background

- Persian Gulf War Veterans report unexpectedly high rates of unexplained chronic pain and fatigue. Although difficult to address effectively, there are evidence-based recommendations for primary care providers. The quality of care of veterans with these conditions is anecdotally poor, but there is little evidence of this.

Method

- Assess current care for medically unexplained chronic pain and fatigue from the primary care provider and patient perspectives
 - Semi-structured interviews of PCPs
 - Chart review
 - Patient surveys
 - Claims data analysis
- Develop quality indicators for measuring performance
- Apply findings effectively and monitor change in outcomes

Funding

- **Dr. Helmer's salary covered by RCD**
- **Additional funding requested**
 - VISN 3 seed grant "Impact of implementation of a clinical practice guideline for medically unexplained chronic pain and fatigue on patient-provider communication"
 - PGW RFA "Evaluation of the Unexplained Pain & Fatigue Care Guideline for Veterans"
- **Infrastructure/Institutional Support**
 - WRIISC
 - Center for Health Care Knowledge Management
 - VA-NJHCS- Ambulatory Care