

In this issue

QUERI Convenes Quality Forum

This issue highlights the QUERI Quality Forum convened in October 2008.

QUERI Celebrates 10 Years at National Meeting

Read highlights from the QUERI National Meeting, held in December 2008, on page 2.

Newly Funded

Find out more about recently funded studies on pages 3 and 4.

For Your Information

Contact information, announcements, and updates on page 4.

Director's Note

This winter issue of *Research Briefs* focuses on VA's Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI), a program created to improve the quality of healthcare for Veterans by implementing research findings into routine clinical practice. QUERI recently held a national meeting marking its 10th year. A summary of the meeting and highlights are presented here, as well as web addresses for access to full presentations and other QUERI information that may be of interest. In addition, we report on an HSR&D- and QUERI-sponsored invitational meeting that was held in October and involved a small group of experts discussing quality measurement and the research needed to advance quality measurement in VA. We hope this information will be useful to investigators as they contemplate new research to advance the fields of implementation research and quality measures development. We also think it will be of interest to managers as they develop strategies to implement new programs and measure quality in an effort to improve care for patients.

Sincerely,



David Atkins, MD, MPH
Director, QUERI

QUERI Quality Forum: Advancing Quality Measurement in VA

On October 29th and 30th, HSR&D and QUERI hosted an invitational workshop of 21 experts on quality measures. Participants included researchers, policy experts, and clinical decision-makers from within and outside VA, with the goal of identifying high-priority areas for research on the development, validation, and implementation of quality measures for the VA healthcare system. In order for VA to maintain its position of national leadership and continue to serve as a model for other systems, QUERI Director David Atkins, MD, MPH, and HSR&D Scientific Program Manager Andrew Guccione, PhD, DPT, convened the forum to review what we know and what we still need to learn about quality measurement within VA, and to identify what research is most important for improving the use of quality measurement within VA.

Day 1: Paper Presentations

On the first day of this conference, five papers (commissioned by HSR&D and QUERI) were presented and discussed. These papers were designed to summarize current evidence regarding the development and application of quality measurement, identify current controversies, and target future directions in quality measure development and implementation that also would supplement the scientific basis for policy.

Day 2: Identifying Research Questions

On the second day of the meeting, participants identified what they felt were the most important research questions related to developing valid measures of quality and performance, with the aim of creating measures that are responsive to the needs of patients, providers, and administrators, that improve healthcare at a reasonable cost, and that ensure optimal patient outcomes from individualized care.

The output of this meeting will help target HSR&D research to the most important areas, especially components of quality measurement development that are unique to VA. It also will provide a scientific foundation to help inform

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QUERI National Meeting 2008: Connecting Research and Patient Care

VA's Health Services Research & Development Service (HSR&D) Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) National Meeting was held from December 10-12, 2008 in Phoenix, AZ. More than 250 researchers, clinicians, and policymakers participated in plenary sessions, workshops, and poster sessions to focus on the vital partnership between VA Research and Operations in facilitating and systematizing the implementation of evidence-based interventions into routine clinical care. The participation of stakeholders from various levels of VHA has helped QUERI determine what problems to focus on and has helped speed the uptake of quality improvement interventions developed by QUERI.

Each of the QUERI Centers focuses on a different disease/condition that is prevalent among Veterans: chronic heart disease, diabetes, HIV/hepatitis, ischemic heart disease, mental health, polytrauma and traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, stroke, and substance use disorders.



Celebrating a decade of QUERI accomplishments, from left to right: Dr. Joe Francis, QUERI Director (2004-2007); Dr. David Atkins, current QUERI Director; Dr. Jack Feussner, former VA Chief Research and Development Officer; and Dr. John Demakis, QUERI Director (1998-2004).

The meeting allowed the nine Centers to share valuable lessons that they have learned about the most effective and efficient implementation strategies to improve quality.

Ten Years of Quality Improvement

The National Meeting brought QUERI leadership, policymakers, researchers, implementation experts, and collaborators (VA and non-VA) to meet face-to-face and learn what new research and implementation practices are in progress throughout the VA healthcare system. Case studies were presented on topics such as increasing HIV testing, and improving family involvement in the care of OEF/OIF Veterans who have sustained polytrauma and/or traumatic brain injury. The meeting also included 18 workshops that focused on a variety of topics important to healthcare for Veterans, including: addressing disparities in healthcare, improving and increasing healthcare for women Veterans, and measuring the success of implementation efforts. More than 80 posters addressed an array of issues important to improving the healthcare of Veterans – from patient safety to stroke prevention to how best to treat homeless Veterans with dual-diagnoses (e.g., mental illness and substance abuse). On the final day of the meeting, QUERI researchers met in 10 concurrent working groups and then made brief presentations summarizing their discussions. These summaries will help inform leadership about how to prioritize future QUERI research in areas that include: organizational readiness to change, health information technology, economic impacts of implementation programs, and patient self-management programs.

The QUERI National Meeting marked QUERI's tenth year

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Drs. Rick Owen and Elizabeth Yano hold special recognition awards for Mental Health QUERI presented by Dr. David Atkins (center), QUERI Director.

MH-QUERI Honored

The Mental Health-QUERI, with centers in Little Rock, AR and Sepulveda, CA, was honored with a Special Recognition Award for demonstrating sustained excellence in carrying out the QUERI mission by establishing effective collaborations and fostering productive partnerships with VA Operations and leadership, in its efforts to improve treatment for depression and schizophrenia among Veterans. MH-QUERI, under the leadership of Lisa Rubenstein, MD, MSPH, and Richard Owen, Jr., MD developed the TIDES model of collaborative care for depression in the primary care setting and conducted a series of projects to help implement this in a number of networks in both primary care and specialty clinics.

Newly Funded

Only awards/projects with funding start dates that have been confirmed since the last issue of *Research Briefs* in August 2008 are listed here.

Career Awardees

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Mary Dellefield, PhD, MS | VA San Diego Health Care System | Guideline Implementation in Nursing Homes: Targeted Supervisory Feedback |
| David Ganz, MD, PhD | VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System | Improving Implementation of Fall Prevention Programs for Older Veterans |
| Heather Reisinger, PhD | Iowa City VAMC | Evaluation of Family Outreach Mental Health Programs for OEF/OIF Veterans |
| Rebecca Sudore, MD | San Francisco VAMC | Enhancing Advance Care Planning in Diverse Elders with Limited Literacy |
| Amal Trivedi, MD, MPH | Providence VAMC | Comparing Quality and Equity of Care in the VA and Medicare Managed Care |

Projects

Deployment Health Research

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Catherine Bradley, MD, MSCE | Iowa City VAMC | Urogenital Symptoms, Depression, and PTSD In OEF/OIF Women Veterans |
| Steven Dobscha, MD | VA Puget Sound Health Care System | Outcomes and Correlates of Suicidal Ideation in OEF/OIF Veterans |
| Leslie Morland, PsyD | VA Pacific Islands Health Care System | Telemental Health and Cognitive Processing Therapy for Rural Combat Veterans with PTSD |
| W. Bruce Vogel, PhD | North Florida/South Georgia VA Health Care System | Identifying Potential Demand for VA Rehabilitation Services for OEF/OIF Veterans |
| Dawne Vogt, PhD | VA Boston Health Care System | Stigma, Gender, and Other Barriers to VHA Use for OEF/OIF Veterans |

Implementation Rapid-Response Projects

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Henry Anaya, PhD | VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System | Evaluation of Readiness to Implement HIV Rapid Testing in SUD Clinics |
| Dean Blevins, PhD | Central Arkansas Veterans Health Care System | Evaluating Facilitation of CBT Implementation in VA Primary Care |
| Hayden Bosworth, PhD | Durham VAMC | Using System Dynamics Tools to Integrate Evidence into VA Stroke Care |
| Eric Cheng, MD | VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System | Identifying Veterans at High-Risk for a First-Time Stroke |
| Christopher Erbes, PhD | Minneapolis VAMC | Impact of Psychiatric Diagnoses and Injury on Vocational Outcomes in OIF Veterans |
| Marylou Guihan, PhD | Hines VAMC | Impact of Organizational Factors of the Spoke and Hub Model on SCI Care |
| Jodie Haselkorn, MD, MPH | VA Puget Sound Health Care System | Access to Specialty Care Veterans with MS: Assessment and Intervention |
| Paul Heidenreich, MD | VA Palo Alto Health Care System | Best VA Practices for Reducing Heart Failure Hospitalizations |
| Paul Heidenreich, MD | VA Palo Alto Health Care System | Disparities in VA Heart Failure Care |
| Susan Kirsh, MD | Cleveland VAMC | Identifying Who Benefits from Diabetes Shared Medical Appointments |
| Daniel Kivlahan, PhD | VA Puget Sound Health Care System | Characteristics Associated with Multiple SUD Treatment Episodes |
| B. Josea Kramer, PhD | VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System | Survey of VA Clinicians' Fall Prevention and Assessment Practices |
| Alyson Littman, PhD, MPH | VA Puget Sound Health Care System | A Formative Evaluation of a Weight Loss Program in VISN 20: MOVE! |
| Karl Lorenz, MD, MSHS | VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System | VA National Plain Quality Indicators Pilot |
| Julie Lowery, PhD | VA Ann Arbor Health Care System | Evaluation of VISN 11 Wound Care Tele-Consultation Program |
| Julie Lowery, PhD | VA Ann Arbor Health Care System | Information-User-Task Fit and the Utility of the Diabetes Cube |
| D. Keith McInnes, ScD | Bedford VAMC | Email Social Marketing of HIV Testing |
| Lisa Najavits, PhD | VA Boston Health Care System | PTSD/Substance Abuse Treatment for OEF/OIF Veterans |
| Linda Nichols, PhD | Memphis VAMC | Team-Based Initiative Support |
| Benjamin Sun, MD | VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System | Creation of a Kiosk-Based Module to Facilitate Urgent-Care HIV Screening |
| Constance Uphold, PhD | North Florida/South Georgia VA Health Care System | Dissemination Evaluation of Educational Materials for Puerto Rican OIF/OEF Veterans and Families |

Continued

Newly Funded

Continued from page 3

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| Todd Wagner, PhD | VA Palo Alto Health Care System | Supporting the Evaluation of the My HealtheVet Personal Health Record |
| James Walsh, MD | Indianapolis VAMC | Optimizing Glycemic Control of Hospitalized Stroke Patients |
| Frances Weaver, PhD | Hines VAMC | Pilot Test of an Improved Smoking Cessation Delivery Care System |
| Elizabeth Yano, PhD, MSPH | VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System | Implementation and Sustainability of VA Women's Mental Health Clinics |
| Investigator-Initiated Research | | |
| Liana Fraenkel, MD, MPH | VA Connecticut Health Care System | Illness Perceptions, Emotions, and Decision Making in Veterans with CMP |
| Richard Frankel, PhD | Indianapolis VAMC | Improving Transfers of Care in VA Nursing and Medical Services |
| Marylou Guihan, PhD | Hines VAMC | Self-Management to Prevent Ulcers in Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury |
| Samuel Ho, MD | VA San Diego Health Care System | An Integrated Care Model for Improving HCV Patient Outcomes |
| Peter Kaboli, MD, MS | Iowa City VAMC | Organizational Factors and Inpatient Medical Care |
| David Katz, MD, MSc | Iowa City VAMC | Improving the Delivery of Smoking Cessation Guidelines in Hospitalized Veterans |
| Stefan Kertesz, MSc, MD | Birmingham VAMC | Primary Care Quality and Service Customization for the Homeless |
| Siamak Noorbaloochi, PhD | Minneapolis VAMC | Generalized Linear Model Analysis under Directional Selection Bias |
| Lawrence Phillips, MD | Atlanta VAMC | Screening for Pre-Diabetes and Early Diabetes in Primary Care |
| Charlene Pope, PhD, MPH, RN | Charleston VAMC | Racial Variations in Communication, Decision Making, and Diabetes Outcomes |
| Gary Rosenthal, MD | Iowa City VAMC | Trial of Low- and High-Intensity Strategies to Maintain Blood Pressure Control |
| Sandra Simmons, PhD | Nashville VAMC | Prevention of Weight Loss in Long-Term Care Veterans |
| Karen Steinhauser, PhD | Durham VAMC | Outlook: An Intervention to Improve Quality of Life in Serious Illness |
| Nursing Research Initiative | | |
| Linda McKinley, RN | Madison VAMC | Reducing Nosocomial Infection in ICUs by Active Screening Surveillance |
| Diana Pope, PhD | Portland VAMC | Speech Intelligibility and Cognition: Are Inpatients Impaired by Noise? |
| Service-Directed Projects | | |
| Matthew Goetz, MD | VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System | Multi-VISN Implementation of a Program to Improve HIV Screening and Testing |
| Thomas Kent, MD | Houston VAMC | The Development and Feasibility Test of Implementing SQUIDSS: A Stroke Quality Improvement Project |
| Scott Sherman, MD, MPH | VA New York Harbor Health Care System | Telephone Care Coordination for Smokers in Mental Health Clinics |
| Service-Directed Research | | |
| Donna Washington, MD, MPH | VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System | Assessment of the Health Care Needs and Barriers to VA Use Experienced by Women |

For Your Information

VA HSR&D Research Briefs is a semi-annual publication of the Office of Research and Development's Health Services Research and Development Service. This issue, along with archived issues of *Research Briefs* and other publications, can be found at www.hsrdr.research.va.gov, or vawww.hsrdr.research.va.gov.

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Contact

We welcome your input. If you have questions, comments, or would like more information about *VA HSR&D Research Briefs*, please contact: Geraldine McGlynn, Editor, at geraldine.mcglynn@va.gov or by phone at 857.364.6073.



Quality Forums *Continued from page 1*

VA policy regarding the application of quality measures within VA to improve health care for Veterans.

Presentation Overview

Karen Adams, PhD, Vice President for National Priorities, National Quality Forum (NQF), set VA quality measurement in the larger perspective of the NQF experience. NQF has learned that organizational priorities should drive measure development and implementation, but also that some measures may not be worth the cost or have a sufficiently large enough impact on quality to be worthwhile.

Tim Hofer, MD, MSc, Diabetes Mellitus QUERI, and Steve Asch, MD, MPH, HIV/Hepatitis QUERI, challenged the group to reconsider the very concept of quality and how it was defined. They noted that quality is a multidimensional concept that should be reflected in the measures researchers use, but is often narrowly understood to represent only what has been measured.

Rod Hayward, MD, and Eve Kerr, MD, MPH, both part of Diabetes Mellitus QUERI, collaborated on a paper that explored the relationship between quality measurement and its ultimate value to patients. Dr. Hayward indicated that optimal measurement systems reward care with a high net value and encourage providers to share decision-making with patients.

Steve Fihn, MD, MPH, Ischemic Heart Disease QUERI, and Chief Officer, Office of Quality and Performance



Working group leaders at the QUERI National Meeting present results of their discussions to meeting attendees.

(OQP), and his OQP colleague and Director of Performance Management, Tammy Czarnecki, MSOL, MSN, RN, analyzed the value as well as the shortcomings of electronic information in evaluating quality of care and measuring performance. As a national leader in the use of the electronic patient record, VA is in a position to lead the move towards measuring quality on a more complete sample of patients and encounters through the use of routinely captured data.

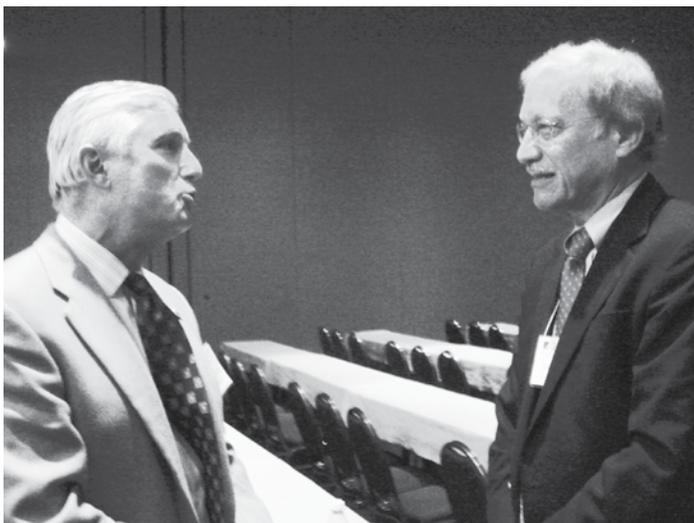
Laura Petersen, MD, Ischemic Heart Disease QUERI, described the literature on the impact of applying performance measures as a tool to improve care, including data on potential downsides of performance measurement that may inadvertently diminish patient preferences and restrict clinicians from providing the best individualized care.

Toward a Research Agenda

The forum provided participants with considerable material from which to develop a preliminary research agenda. Many of the agenda questions require further development, but include questions such as:

- What is an optimal combination of structure, process and outcome measures to ensure quality?
- What sets of measures best correspond to our notion of quality at system, provider, and patient levels?
- What factors influence the perceived value of a measure for administrators, providers, and patients?

Preliminary work and deliberations at the workshop/meeting gave rise to several near-term goals including: dissemination to a considerably broader audience within HSR&D via the 2009 HSR&D National Meeting; disseminating papers presented at the meeting in a peer-reviewed publication; refining the research questions into an HSR&D solicitation; and conducting a panel presentation at the 2009 AcademyHealth Meeting to alert a non-VA audience to some of the lessons learned through VA's pursuit of quality and experience in performance measurement.



Dr. Stephan Fihn, Chief Officer, Office of Quality and Performance (left), and Dr. Seth Eisen, HSR&D Director (right), discuss the importance of QUERI stakeholder collaboration at QUERI National Meeting.

QUERI National Meeting *Continued from page 2*

as a crucial part of VA's quality improvement efforts. The plenary presentations highlighted specific achievements, several of which were discussed throughout the meeting. For example, QUERI investigators developed an evidence-based collaborative approach to depression management that has proven successful in the VA healthcare system (see special recognition award on page 2), and QUERI was instrumental in creating a system to track diagnostic and interventional catheterization procedures for Veterans with ischemic heart disease. All VA cath labs now participate in the Cardiac Assessment, Reporting and Tracking System for Cardiac Catheterization Laboratories (CART-CL). QUERI interventions also have increased influenza vaccination rates among Veterans with spinal cord injury, as well as improving rates for alcohol abuse screening and HIV testing.

Other Meeting Highlights

To celebrate QUERI's achievements over the past 10 years, former QUERI leaders Drs. John Feussner, John Demakis, and Joe Francis offered insights into how the idea of linking research to practice became a reality in VA. Dr. Feussner, former VA Chief Research and Development Officer, noted that the QUERI program grew out of VHA's renewed commitment to quality improvement during the

tenure of Under Secretary Kenneth Kizer, MD. As former QUERI Director (1998-2004), Dr. Demakis discussed the challenges in beginning this ambitious program, including the development of the key six-step QUERI process that continues to guide QUERI researchers. His successor as QUERI Director (2004-2007), Dr. Francis, reflected on the difficulty of bridging the worlds of research, which generates a great amount of data and requires a high level of certainty, and those of managers, who want information that is good enough to guide changes in policy or clinical decision-making.

Important QUERI Collaborators

QUERI has emerged as a leader in implementation science and an important quality improvement program. QUERI can contribute even more to VA healthcare and the health of our Veterans by leveraging these efforts with those of other groups driving change across the VA healthcare system, including the Office of Quality and Performance (OQP), Patient Care Services (PCS), Operations and Management, the Office of Nursing Services, the Office of Information and Technology, as well as others. These collaborations have been and will continue to be critical to VA's continued success.



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