Spotlight on Women Cyberseminar Series

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VA Women’s Health Research Consortium

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Background

- Many more women serving in military
- High numbers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan
- VA clinicians caring for twice the #s as a decade ago
- Increased demand for research to inform evidence-based practice and policy
Abbreviated History of VA Women’s Health Research

Major contributions by VA HSR&D Service

1983
- VA mandates that all VA research studies include women veterans (response to PL 98-160)

1992
- Early VA WH agenda-setting process begun using NIH criteria

1993
- 1st HSR&D WH solicitation → funds 3 SDRs

1996
- 2nd HSR&D WH research solicitation → funds 5 studies

2000
- WH research agenda, 1st syst review, WH SMRB, JGIM issue, interest group
- 3rd solicitation, 1st WH-focused CDAs funded

2004

2010
- ↑ WH research portfolio, VA WHSR conf, WHRC/PBRN, Vietnam WV study

http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/womens_health/search.cfm
VA’s Women’s Health Research Agenda (2004): Goals for Fostering Research

- Address identified research priorities
- Build ORD capacity
  - Improved networking, collaborations, mentoring
  - www1.va.gov/resdev/programs/womens_health/
- Address methodologic limitations & other barriers
  - Women’s Health scientific review enhanced
  - VA women’s health & deployment health solicitations
- Increase visibility/awareness of VA WH research
  - JGIM Special Issue on VA Women’s Health Care
  - Listserv, collaboration, mentorship, interest group

"...more papers published in the last 5 years, than the previous 25 years combined."

Number of VA Women’s Health Researchers (1990s)
Growth in # of VA Women's Health Researchers (2004)
Substantial Growth in # of VA Women’s Health Researchers (2010)
So we have the numbers of potential PIs...

But most VA investigators exclude women from their studies

– Too few, too hard to recruit
– Can’t recruit enough to look at by gender
– Not really interested in gender differences
– Don’t understand their health care needs
– Don’t understand how they use VA care
– Can’t get VA women’s research published

Researchers are from Mars, managers are from Venus...

“Why don’t researchers ever study the problems I need help with?”

“Why don’t health care managers ever pay attention to my research?”

Source: David Atkins, MD, MPH, VA QUERI Program.
Researchers are from Mars, Managers are from Venus…

■ “Why don’t researchers ever study the problems I need help with?”

■ “Why don’t health care managers ever pay attention to my research?”

We’re never going to get over the “quality chasm” this way

Source: David Atkins, MD, MPH, VA QUERI Program.
Research-Clinical Partnerships

- Passive handoff of research evidence
  - Doesn’t work
  - “Delivering a dead mouse”

- Different perspectives, priorities and pressures
  - Researchers’ timelines and expectations differ
  - Managers don’t have luxury of wait-and-see

Source: S Asch, QUERI HIV, 2008.
Need to Accelerate Impacts

- Researchers may not have enough training in clinical or HSR trials let alone implementation
  - Need training on how to get to interventions (design)
- Not enough information to adapt interventions to the circumstances of women veterans
  - Different experiences, patterns of use, comorbidities, health care needs, expectations, trust
  - Ex: TIDES (depression collaborative care)
    - Touches women who attend PC practices but not used in women’s clinics OR adapted to address comorbid PTSD and/or MST
- Inclusion of women already required, so need to market to, educate broader research community
VA Women’s Health Research Consortium Developed to Meet Needs

- Use research to help transform VA care
- Arm VA investigators with knowledge, skills and collaborations necessary to generate new scientific knowledge
  - Evidence-based care models, interventions, strategies for transforming VA care for women
- Help VA HSR&D meet its WH research performance measures
VA Women’s Health Research Consortium Approaches

- Provide methodological and content-related education/training (e.g., cyberseminars)
- Build capabilities and collaboration
  - Technical consultation support
  - Mentorship, communities of practice
- Accelerate dissemination and implementation of research into practice
Consortium Part of Larger
VA Women’s Health Research Network

For another day…
VA Women’s Health Research Network

Women’s Health Research Consortium

Consortium Hub (Los Angeles)
- Economics
- Databases
- Clinical trials expertise
- Post-deployment health
- CIPRS
- Statistics
- Qualitative methods
- Survey/IRB
- Implementation

Practice Based Research Network

Coordinating Center (Palo Alto)
- Los Angeles
- Durham
- Iowa City
- Palo Alto

Durham Clinical trials expertise
**Target Audiences**

- **VACO, VISNs, VAMCs**
  - VA WH researchers
    - Interventions
    - Consultation
    - Mentorship
  - Other VA established researchers
    - Educate basics
    - Connect
    - Market PBRN
  - VA WH and other clinicians
    - QI training
    - Connect
    - Collaboration
VA Women’s Health Research Consortium

Research Experience

- High
- Medium
- Low

Consortium Activities

- Intervention design and theory
- Multisite/clinical trial design
- QI/implementation research
- Direct technical consultation/support
- Identification of collaborators/expertise
- Scientific review/feedback
- Mentorship/partnering processes
- Skill building/training/education
- Career development guidance

>150 VA Women’s Health Research Interest Group & Listserv Members

- Direct technical consultation/support
- Identification of collaborators/expertise
- Scientific review/feedback

General HSR&D Investigators Capable of Adding Women Vets OR Generating New Women’s-Focused Research Proposals

- Education on women veterans’ issues
- Direct technical consultation/support
- Link to collaborators/content expertise
- Gender-specific adaptations to interventions
- Market PBRN capabilities

VA Clinicians (e.g., Women’s Health, Primary Care, Subspecialty Care, Acute Care, Long Term Care) (BOTTOM-UP PBRN QI RESEARCH)

- Education on women veterans’ issues
- Highlight quality gaps and opportunities
- Create collaborative networks on key topics
- Evaluate frontline clinician perspectives
- Direct and indirect technical consultation
- Basic training on PBRN capabilities for QI
VA Women’s Health Research Consortium

Steering Committee Input

Prioritize Training & Consultation Activities

Investigator and Clinician Needs Assessments

Market segmentation & Strategic planning
Steering Committee Input

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Market segmentation & Strategic planning

Investigator and Clinician Needs Assessments

Cyberseminars, Consultations, Web Tools

Skill Building & Career Guidance
(e.g., study designs, sampling plans, survey design, measurement, qualitative methods)

Education on Women Veterans
(e.g., sociodemographics, disease burden, utilization needs, care organization)

Mentorship & Collaboration
(e.g., direct technical consults, identify suitable collaborators, content and methods experts)

Intervention Development
(e.g., patient, provider, organizational theories; intervention design and pilot testing procedures)

Multi-Site Intervention Trials
(e.g., clinical trial design, blinding, eligibility criteria, recruitment/retention, intent to treat analyses)

Implementation & QI Research
(e.g., clinical trial design, blinding, eligibility criteria, recruitment/retention, intent to treat analyses)
VA Women’s Health Research Consortium

Cyberseminars, Consultations, Web Tools
- Skill Building & Career Guidance
  (e.g., study designs, sampling plans, survey design, measurement, qualitative methods)
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  (e.g., sociodemographics, disease burden, utilization needs, care organization)
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  (e.g., direct technical consults, identify suitable collaborators, content and methods experts)
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  (e.g., clinical trial design, blinding, eligibility criteria, recruitment/retention, intent to treat analyses)

Steering Committee Input

Prioritize Training & Consultation Activities

Market segmentation & Strategic planning

Investigator and Clinician Needs Assessments

Impacts

QI Research/Implementation

Collaborative networks

Scientific review

Market PBRN Capabilities
Research-to-Practice “Pipeline”

- Basic Biomedical Research
- Translation to human studies
- Clinical Science & Knowledge
- Efficacy to effectiveness
- Health Services Research
- Adoption, implementation, spread, sustainability
- Implementation Research

- “T1”
- “T2”
- Changes in routine care
  - Interventions, practice guidelines
  - Document and diagnose gaps
  - Design/test implementation strategies
    - Organizational, provider, individual theories
  - processes
  - outcomes

Adapted from: VA Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) pipeline model and Sung NS, et al., Central challenges facing the national clinical research enterprise, JAMA 2003.
Most VA women’s health research is at QUERI steps 2, 3 and 4 (pilot interventions) w/notable exceptions (PTSD, gender sensitivity)

Adapted from CIPRS (Mittman), VA QUERI Program
VA Women’s Health Research Education/Training

- **Spotlight on Women’s Health cyberseminars**
  - Mapping to different target audiences
    - Methodology seminars
    - Advanced methodology seminars
    - Research highlight seminars
    - Clinical quality improvement research seminars
  - Mapping to needs assessment results

- **Other venues for in-person training**
  - Workshops/precourses at HSR&D, SGIM, AcademyHealth, QUERI, others
VA Women’s Health Research Cyberseminars To Date

VA Patient Centered Medical Homes and Patient Centered Care for Women Veterans
- Melissa McNeil, MD, MPH (Pittsburgh VA, Univ Pittsburgh)
- Sarah Scholle, DrPH (Nat’l Comm for Quality Assurance)

Improving Care for Women Veterans: Moving to Interventions and Implementation
- Lori Bastian, MD, MPH (Durham VA, Duke University)
- Susan Frayne, MD, MPH (VA Palo Alto, Stanford Univ)
- Linda Lipson, MA (VA HSR&D Service)
- Ciaran Phibbs, PhD (VA Palo Alto, HERC, Stanford University)
- Elizabeth Yano, PhD (VA Greater Los Angeles, UCLA)

Systematic Literature Review: Women Veterans Research
- Bevanne Bean-Mayberry, MD, MHS (VA Greater Los Angeles, UCLA)
- Isomi Miake-Lye, BA (VA Greater Los Angeles)
VA Women’s Health Research Cyberseminars To Date

Findings from the National Survey of Women Veterans
- Donna L. Washington, MD, MPH (VA Greater Los Angeles, UCLA)
- Laura Herrera, MD (WVHSHG Discussant)

Institute of Medicine’s Report on Women’s Health: A Book Review
- Robert Wallace, PhD (IoM Board on Select Populations, University of Iowa City)
- Elizabeth Yano, PhD (WHRN Discussant)

Women’s Health Evaluation Initiative: A Research-Clinical Operations Partnership
- Susan Frayne, MD, MPH (VA Palo Alto, Stanford Univ)
- Patricia Hayes, PhD, (WVHSHG Discussant)

VA Women’s Health Research Needs Assessment Results

- Top methodological training needs*
  - Implementation research
  - Statistical methods for evaluating gender differences
  - Influence of organizational factors on quality or impact of health system redesign on care
  - Intervention design
  - Using administrative data
  - Sampling strategies

*Over 50% of respondents rating extremely helpful
VA Women’s Health Research Needs Assessment Results

- Top areas researchers want to learn more about*
  - Quality of care for women veterans
  - Access to care for women veterans
  - Women veterans’ mental health
  - Primary care for women veterans
  - Post deployment health
  - Intimate partner violence for women veterans
  - Military sexual trauma

*Over 50% of respondents rating topics extremely helpful
VA Women’s Health Research Needs Assessment Results

Barriers to conducting VA women’s health research*

- Difficulty obtaining funding
- Insufficient protected time for research
- Difficulty accessing female research subjects
- Insufficient access to statistical programmers
- Difficulty identifying potential collaborators
- Lack of familiarity with national VA women’s health policy issues

*Over 50% of respondents rating issues as interfering somewhat to a lot with their ability to do VA women’s health research.
VA Women’s Health Research Mentorship Program

- Outreach & recruitment of mentors
- Identification of “mentees”
- Identifying sources of support for “mentees”
  - VA Women’s Health Fellowship Program
  - VA HSR&D Career Development Awards
  - VA/NIMH Implementation Research Fellowships
  - NIH BRCH and Other K-Type Awards
  - RWJ Clinical Scholars & Generalist Faculty Scholars
VA Women’s Health Research Technical Consultation

• Build communities of practice
  – Key topical areas (e.g., access, OEF/OIF)
  – Will be launching regular conference calls
  – Invitations based on interests (registration)

• Continual email consults/troubleshooting

• Group and one-on-one consultations
  – Focused on research development
  – Scientific review preparatory to proposal submission
VA Women’s Health Research
Sample Technical Consultation Areas

- Study design, sampling strategies (including how to achieve adequate #s of women veterans)
- Survey design/development, IRB issues
- Large database and cost analyses
- Qualitative methods (focus groups, semi-structured interviews) and analysis
- Statistical analysis (and power calculations)
- Implementation science and research
VA Women’s Health Research Needs Assessment Results

Top resources or services requested*

– Brief newsletter (conferences, funding opportunities, VA policy initiatives, research events)
– Consultation/technical assistance in developing VA WH research grant proposals
– Support for multi-site research (IRB, local HR, etc)
– Help in developing relationships with local clinicians/leaders for multi-site research
– Help identifying collaborators

*Over 50% of respondents indicated very likely to use
VA Women’s Health Research Dissemination

VA Women’s Health Services Research Field-based Meeting (July 2010)

– Virtually every VACO Office and major group

– Reps from DoD, DHHS (NIH, NIMH, AHRQ), DOL, IOM, NCQA, SWHR, Rand, SVAC/HVAC, VSOs

– >75 oral and poster presentations*

*Opening reception and plenary talks available at www.research.va.gov.
HSR&D Field-Based Research Meeting: Perceived Value

- Networking w/potential collaborators (96%)*
- Valued mix of VA and non-VA (99%)
- Helped with professional development (96%)
- Broadened VA women’s HSR knowledge (100%)
- Importance of research-clinical partnerships (98%)
- Understand strategic/info needs of VACO (87%)
- Research methods plan to use in future (75%)
- Data sources plan to use in future (80%)

n=86

*Agree to strongly agree
HSR&D Field-Based Research Meeting: *Perceived Value*

- Developed ideas for new WH research (95%)
- Positive impact on L(pursuing WHSR) (89%)
- Helped me identify possible mentors (91% of 56)
- Info will help me move to int’ns/implem (79%)
- Conference compared favorably with others (97%)
- Appreciated efforts to reward/recognize (99%)
- Overall conference was worthwhile (99%)
- Want regular updates on WHSR progress (98%)

n=86

*Agree to strongly agree*
HSR&D Field-Based Research Meeting: Future Interests

Majority felt balance of topics just right but if anything wanted even more on:

- Learning about VA leadership needs, priorities
- Learning about implementing research into practice and policy
- Time spent on networking, fostering collaboration
- Overall conference duration
HSR&D Field-Based Research Meeting: Perceived Value of Future Meetings

**Importance of Future Meeting**

- Very important: 96%
- Somewhat important: 4%
- Not very important: 0%
- Not needed: 0%

**About how often should one be convened?**

- Every year: 44%
- Every 2 years: 44%
- Every 3 years: 10%
- Every 4+ years: 2%
- Not needed: 0%
VA Women’s Health Research Dissemination (cont’d)

- Call for Papers in Women’s Health Issues
  - Manuscripts were due Nov 15th, 2010
  - Final set of manuscripts under revision/review
- Technical reports on methods, procedures
- Content for ORD Women’s Health website
- VA Intranet Sharepoint website
  - Consider social networking site (e.g., Facebook)
- Call for Papers in JGIM Supplement (2013)
For more information…

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