

AWARD NUMBER: W81XWH-19-1-0207

TITLE: Development of a Military-Specific Transdiagnostic Eating-Disorder Survey and Screening Tool in a Nationally Representative Sample of Veterans

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Kelsie Forbush, Ph.D.

CONTRACTING ORGANIZATION: University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc.

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14. ABSTRACT Military personnel must adhere to body mass index (BMI) and bodyfat % requirements, as well as physical performance standards. Failure to maintain these standards can result in referral to weight-loss programs and, eventually, discharge from service. The emphasis on body weight within the military may promote unhealthy attempts at weight loss and the development of eating disorders (EDs). If left untreated, EDs result in significantly greater VA healthcare utilization and physical and psychiatric morbidity and mortality. Yet, despite the public-health importance of addressing EDs in active-duty and veteran populations, there are no universal ED screening measures implemented in the VA system and there are no national VA treatment programs for EDs. Our primary objectives are to validate/develop: 1) a transdiagnostic ED assessment for use in VA research and clinical settings and 2) a transdiagnostic short-form screening tool to identify veterans with an eating, mood, anxiety, or trauma-related disorder. Objectives will be achieved through two large studies that will recruit nationally representative samples of veterans separated from service within the past year. The project is IRB approved and recruitment will begin in September, 2020.		

15. SUBJECT TERMS Eating disorders; assessment; screening tools; veterans					
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1. **INTRODUCTION:** *Narrative that briefly (one paragraph) describes the subject, purpose and scope of the research.*

Despite the seriousness of eating disorders (EDs) among active-duty and veteran populations, there are currently no tools developed for use in military personnel or veterans to screen for possible EDs. Thus, there is a **critical need** to develop screening tools to identify and refer veterans with EDs for treatment. Our **central hypothesis** is that an integrated transdiagnostic framework for assessing EDs will lead to improvements in the ability to identify veterans who are most at-risk for poor post-discharge psychosocial adjustment who need referral to treatment services. Our **preliminary data strongly** supported our hypothesis, specifically the need for transdiagnostic screening tools to accurately identify disordered eating in veterans. To address this need, we created a self-report measure – the Eating Pathology Symptoms Inventory (EPSI) – that has been shown to more comprehensively measure disordered eating concerns in both men and women. Our preliminary data showed that veterans’ scores on certain EPSI scales were higher than outpatients being treated for an ED. Moreover, our previous work in civilians with EDs showed that by combining the EPSI with a proven measure of depression, anxiety, and trauma (the Inventory of Depression and Anxiety Symptoms – II [IDAS-II]), we were able to predict future recovery and psychosocial adjustment at three and six-month follow-up. Although the EPSI and IDAS-II represent potentially useful screening measures, the total number of items across these measures is 144, which is too long for screening purposes. Thus, our **primary objective** is to create a short-form screening tool based on the EPSI and IDAS-II to identify veterans who may have an eating, mood, anxiety, or trauma disorder. **Secondary objectives** are to: **1)** test relationships among eating, mood, anxiety, trauma, and substance misuse in the first six months following discharge and **2)** conduct interviews in a subset of 100 veterans on perceived institutional/organizational barriers to obtaining ED and trauma-related treatment during active duty. Objectives will be achieved through two studies. **Study 1:** Veterans (N=1,000) will complete the EPSI and IDAS-II at four time points. We will assess the reliability and validity of these measures in veterans and develop a short-form screener. **Study 2:** Veterans (N=400) will complete our new shorter form and we will test whether our screen can identify true cases of eating, mood, anxiety, and trauma disorders. Post 9/11 veterans (discharged within the past year) will be recruited from the VA/DoD Identity Repository.

2. **KEYWORDS:**

Eating disorders; veterans; assessment; screening tools; depression; anxiety; post-traumatic stress disorder

3. **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

What were the major goals of the project?

Primary Objectives: Our primary objectives are to validate/develop: **1)** the Eating Pathology Symptoms Inventory (EPSI) and Inventory of Depression and Anxiety Symptoms-II (IDAS-II) for use in VA research and clinical settings and **2)** a short-form (brief) screening tool based on the EPSI and IDAS-II to identify veterans who may have an eating, mood, or anxiety disorder (including trauma).

Secondary objectives: Our secondary objectives are to: **1)** elucidate temporal relationships among ED symptoms and internalizing and externalizing psychopathology in the first six months following military discharge and **2)** obtain qualitative data on perceived institutional/organizational barriers to obtaining ED and trauma-related treatment during military service.

As stated in our approved SOW, we had the following major goals with target dates within the time-frame of this progress report.

1. Major Task 1: Prepare Research Protocol

Milestone Achieved: All sites IRB approval (100% achieved)

- a. Finalize human subjects' protocol and secure IRB approval. *Target Date:* Pre-award to 3 Months. *Completion Date:* 11/06/2019
- b. Coordinate with sites for IRB protocol submission. *Target Date:* Pre-award to 3 Months. *Completion Date:* 11/06/2019
- c. Coordinate among sites for annual IRB continuing reviews. *Target Date:* As needed.
- d. Receive DoD HRPO approval. *Target Date:* Pre-award to 6 Months. *Completion Date:* 12/06/2019

2. Major Task 2: Hiring and Training

Milestone Achieved: Research staff trained (100% achieved)

- a. Advertise and interview for project-related staff. *Target Date:* Pre-award to 6 months *Completion Date:* 10/31/2019
- b. Hire and train staff. *Target Date:* 1-6 Months *Completion Date:* 02/04/2020
- c. Provide training to research staff in issues relevant to military and veteran culture. *Target Date:* 4-6 Months *Completion Date:* 09/27/2019

3. Major Task 3: Participant Recruitment and Testing

Milestone Achieved: First participant returns online or mail-in survey (100% achieved)

- a. Coordinate with sites to ensure readiness for data collection. *Target Date:* 3-6 Months *Completion Date:* 01/27/2020
- b. Extract data from VADIR to obtain list of potential participants to recruit. *Target Date:* 6 Months *Completion Date:* 12/30/2019
- c. Initiate subject recruitment and survey mailing (N=4,500 invited participants to achieve target sample size of N=1000). *Target Date:* 9/15/2020

Milestone Achieved: Aim 1 data collection completed (10% achieved)

- d. All baseline surveys are completed. *Target Date:* 12 Months
- e. Initiate follow-up survey mailings. *Target Date:* 6 Months
- f. All follow-up surveys are completed. *Target Date:* 18 Months

4. Major Task 4: Data Entry, Cleaning, and Analysis

Milestone Achieved: Survey database is cleaned and ready for analysis (0% achieved)

- a. Baseline data are entered and cleaned. *Target Date:* 14 Months.
- b. Follow-up data are entered and cleaned. *Target Date:* 18 Months.

Milestone Achieved: Survey database is cleaned and ready for analysis (0% achieved)

- a. Data analyses for Aim 1. *Target Date:* 18-21 Months.

5. Major Task 5: Aim 2 Participant Recruitment and Testing

Milestone Achieved: First participant returns online or mail-in survey (0% achieved)

- a. Coordinate with sites to ensure readiness for Study 2 data collection. *Target Date:* 21-23 Months
- b. Extract data from VADIR to obtain list of potential participants to recruit. *Target Date:* 24 Months
- c. Initiate subject recruitment and survey mailing (N=1,000 invited to participant to achieve target sample size of N=400). *Target Date:* 24 Months

Milestone Achieved: Aim 2 data collection completed (0% achieved)

- d. All surveys are completed. *Target Date:* 30 Months
- e. Initiate interviews. *Target Date:* 24 Months
- f. All interviews are completed. *Target Date:* 33 Months

7. **Major Task 6: Aim 2 Participant Recruitment and Testing**
Milestone Achieved: Survey database is cleaned and ready for analysis (0% achieved)
 - a. Data entered and cleaned. *Target Date: 33-36 Months***Milestone Achieved: Sensitivity, specificity, positive/negative predictive power, and ROC curve analyses completed (0% achieved)**
 - b. Data analyses for Aim 2. *Target Date: 34-36 Months***Milestone Achieved: Report results from Aim 1 and Aim 2 analyses (0% achieved)**
 - c. Collaborate as a team to disseminate findings (presentations, publications, VA) *Target Date: 24-36 Months*
8. **Major Task 7: Exploratory Aim 1 Data Analysis**
Milestone Achieved: Exploratory Aim 1 analyses are completed. (0% achieved)
 - a. Conduct linear mixed model analyses. *Target Date: 24-27 Months*
9. **Major Task 8: Exploratory Aim 2 Qualitative Interview Development, Testing, and Analysis**
Milestone Achieved: Qualitative semi-structured interview developed and interviewers trained (0% achieved)
 - a. Develop and pilot test qualitative survey questions with study team experts. *Target Date: 9-18 Months*
 - b. Train graduate-student interviewers to conduct qualitative interviews. *Target Date: 16-18 Months***Milestone Achieved: Qualitative analyses are completed (0% achieved)**
 - c. Qualitative interview coding and analysis *Target Date: 24-36 Months*

What was accomplished under these goals?

As noted on the previous page, we have met Major Tasks 1-3 in our Statement of Work (SOW) and we are currently collecting data for Aim 1.

Major Activities: Major activities included **1)** preparing the research protocol and securing IRB approval; **2)** hiring and training; and **3)** participant recruitment and testing

We are currently on-track with all goals, activities, and milestones listed in our initial Statement of Work (SOW), although we are slightly behind our originally proposed timeline. Below we elaborate on our accomplishments:

We hired an additional full-time Project Coordinator (Ms. Barnhart), which completed the hiring and training process of professional staff for this project. Ms. Barnhart received one-on-one training under the supervision of Ms. Nelson and Dr. Forbush, in addition to group trainings, weekly meetings with the study team at the University of Kansas, and attending monthly team meetings with the full grant staff.

In terms of participant recruitment and testing, we were able to access VADIR data by 12/31/2019. Next, we received approval from the VA Eastern Kansas Health System Privacy Officer and VA to transfer data to the University of Kansas on 5/15/2020. VADIR data were then cleaned and stratification analyses were completed to create a random sub-set of participants which was analyzed by Dr. Gaddy and transferred to the University of Kansas on 6/16/2020. Although we planned to have all Aim 1 data collected by 10/1/2020, we were delayed due to the time it took to obtain data transfer approval and issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which time in-person laboratory activities at the University of Kansas were shut down.

However, the University of Kansas granted our lab permission for a partial reopening to continue our DoD-funded research in July, 2020. This granted access allowed authorized lab personnel to

continue preparation for the onset of participant recruitment, as well as copying and printing materials related to this project. We are currently recruiting participants for Aim 1 and anticipate that we will have completed Aim 1 data collection within the next six months.

We have achieved the majority of our proposed milestones on time and are now on-track to complete Aim 1 data collection within the next six months.

What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided?

There have been several professional development opportunities provided to research team members in the first year of funding.

Group Training Workshop: We developed a “Veterans and Disordered Eating” training at the University of Kansas. Members of the University of Kansas community and DoD grant team members were in attendance. The training provided information about military culture (Mr. Mike Denning, Consultant), gender and the military (Dr. Alesha Doan, Co-I), general mental health and mental-health treatment in the military (Dr. Joanna Wiese, Consultant), and veteran culture (Dr. Mary Oehlert, Co-I), and eating disorders in the military (Dr. Kelsie Forbush, PI). The goal was to provide greater knowledge in the area of military culture and mental health, as well as help our team learn about the aims and goals of the DoD research grant. The training included a pre-training quiz to assess participants’ baseline knowledge; group activities; lectures; and ample time for questions. The training was offered for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for professional psychologists in the community. We received positive feedback from our team members and community members for this workshop.

Leadership Training: We hosted a full-day workshop to teach team members (e.g., Post-Doctoral Scholars, Graduate Students, and Project Coordinators) to learn foundational information to help them succeed at training and supervising research assistants. The leadership training included information and small-group work focused on: **1)** laboratory policies, procedures, and philosophy; **2)** maintaining data quality and research integrity; **3)** resolving conflict and problem-solving; **4)** providing feedback; **5)** time management.

Data Management Training: We developed a database management training program for DoD grant team members. The training provided an overview of the participant tracking database, REDCap. The goal was to provide a better understanding of the database prior to the launch of the study. Team members were asked to watch a series of tutorial videos before the training. The training included a demonstration of the database. A list of individualized tasks was assigned to the lab members to complete on a mock training database. Lab members were required to complete the list of tasks correctly before they were allowed to have access to the project on the database.

Lab Meetings/DoD Project Meetings: The research laboratory meets each Friday morning for one hour to discuss progress across all laboratory projects. Laboratory meetings also involve discussion of research articles and presentations by graduate students and post-doctoral fellows and critique of these projects to facilitate professional development. All senior personnel on the grant meet once per month via Zoom.

Individual Meetings: Dr. Forbush meets regularly (bi-monthly) with the Project Coordinators (Ms. Sarah Nelson and Ms. Elsey Barnhart) and (weekly) with Post-Doctoral Fellow (Dr. Swanson) to talk about study progress, grant and individual research goals and progress, and provide one-on-one training across numerous areas (e.g., instruction on how to submit IRB proposals).

Other Opportunities: The University of Kansas offers a wealth of additional opportunities for professional development (see <https://kupce.ku.edu/browse-subjects>), including leadership training; training in information technology; and offers numerous workshops and events that are often free to KU staff members.

How were the results disseminated to communities of interest?

Describe how the results were disseminated to communities of interest. Include any outreach activities that were undertaken to reach members of communities who are not usually aware of these project activities, for the purpose of enhancing public understanding and increasing interest in learning and careers in science, technology, and the humanities.

Nothing to report.

What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals?

If this is the final report, state "Nothing to Report."

Describe briefly what you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals and objectives.

As noted above, we began Aim 1 recruitment in September 2020. We anticipate that data collection for Aim 1 will be complete in March 2021. Following completion of data collection for Aim 1, we will focus on data cleaning and initial analyses. We anticipate data cleaning and initial analysis for Aim 1 will be completed in Summer 2021. We plan to present preliminary results to report to the community during our next annual reporting period. We will also present our work at VA mental-health conferences, such as the VA Health Service Research and Development conference, and locally at our KU-VA Networking events. The KU-VA Networking events are two-hour programs to introduce VA researchers/clinicians to KU faculty researchers and feature research presentations and discussions to facilitate introductions and provide a useful exchange of research interests and resources. We plan on presenting on the aims, goals, and preliminary findings for Aim 1 of this grant at one of the KU-VA networking events during the next reporting period. To ensure that our work is accessible to the general public, we will collaborate with our press offices to create press releases to disseminate our work as results become available.

4. IMPACT:

What was the impact on the development of the principal discipline(s) of the project?

Nothing to report.

What was the impact on other disciplines?

Nothing to report.

What was the impact on technology transfer?

Nothing to report.

What was the impact on society beyond science and technology?

Nothing to report.

5. CHANGES/PROBLEMS:

Changes in approach and reasons for change

Nothing to report.

Actual or anticipated problems or delays and actions or plans to resolve them

Due to the spread of COVID-19, changes have been made to the timeline. The University of Kansas halted in-person research activities and in-person work in our laboratory from March 2020 until July 2020. These delays were necessary in order to establish protocols for in-person research, which were necessary to protect our staff and university community from illness. In July 2020 we applied for, and were subsequently granted, partial reactivation of our laboratory. Prior to re-entry into the lab, all of our study personnel completed COVID-19 training requirements. Our policies now allow only one team member into the lab at a time with a cleaning period between staff members in accordance with the COVID-19 safety protocols. A maximum of two lab staff members are allowed to work in lab each day. Given that our study design requires access to our heavy-duty copier/printer, the lack of access to our lab impeded our study progress during the research laboratory “shut down” period.

We also switched printing companies, which resulted in an unanticipated delay. We experienced unsatisfactory work with the original printing company incorrectly printing certain study materials. To resolve this issue, the University of Kansas Business Service Agreements Office terminated the original printing contract and we set up a new contract with a different printing company who will complete the printing and mailing.

Changes that had a significant impact on expenditures

From 07/01/19 - 8/31/20, \$160,325.24 of payroll funds were used. Year 1 (07/01/19 - 09/30/2020), \$214,664 was budgeted for personnel (salary + fringe). Due to COVID, some staff were required to take a temporary salary cut. There were also hiring delays.

\$4,500 in participant payments was issued prior to the original start date of 10/01/19. \$86,966 has been budgeted for participant reimbursement.

\$5,724.92 in supplies was spent for printing recruitment materials.

While \$4,500 was budgeted for travel, to date no travel has been taken, nor has this been projected onto the ledger.

The total expenses for Year 1 is \$236,347.37.

Significant changes in use or care of human subjects, vertebrate animals, biohazards, and/or select agents

Significant changes in use or care of human subjects

Nothing to report.

Significant changes in use or care of vertebrate animals

Nothing to report.

Significant changes in use of biohazards and/or select agents

Nothing to report.

6. PRODUCTS:

- **Publications, conference papers, and presentations**

Journal publications.

Nothing to report.

Books or other non-periodical, one-time publications.

Nothing to report.

Other publications, conference papers and presentations.

Nothing to report.

- **Website(s) or other Internet site(s)**

Nothing to report.

- **Technologies or techniques**

Nothing to report.

- **Inventions, patent applications, and/or licenses**

Nothing to report.

- **Other Products**

Nothing to report.

7. PARTICIPANTS & OTHER COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

What individuals have worked on the project?

Name:	Kelsie Forbush, PhD
Project Role:	Principal Investigator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5900-4204
Nearest person month worked:	6
Contribution to Project:	No change.
Name:	Alesha Doan, PhD
Project Role:	Co-Investigator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1348-9023
Nearest person month worked:	1
Contribution to Project:	No change.
Name:	Qianqi (Chelsea) Song, PhD
Project Role:	Co-Investigator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4368-2940
Nearest person month worked:	1
Contribution to Project:	No change.

Name: David Watson, PhD
Project Role: Co-Investigator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID): <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9632-2159>
Nearest person month worked: 2
Contribution to Project: No change.

Name: Mary Oehlert, PhD
Project Role: Co-Investigator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID): N/A
Nearest person month worked: 1
Contribution to Project: No change.

Name: Joanna Wiese, PhD
Project Role: Co-Investigator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID): N/A
Nearest person month worked: 1
Contribution to Project: No change.

Name: Mike Denning
Project Role: Co-Investigator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID): N/A
Nearest person month worked: 1
Contribution to Project: No change.

Name: Trevor Swanson, PhD
Project Role: Post-Doctoral Fellow
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID): N/A
Nearest person month worked: 9
Contribution to Project: Dr. Swanson cleaned and created a computer coded syntax for the data stratification analysis. He attended planning meetings and has created graphs to provide descriptive statistics for the team.

Name: Sarah Nelson
Project Role: Project Coordinator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID): N/A
Nearest person month worked: 12
Contribution to Project: Ms. Nelson coordinated and attended planning meetings. She has performed work in preparing the study to launch, assistance with all IRB submissions, and training Ms. Barnhart as she transitions into the role of Project Coordinator alongside Ms. Nelson.

Name: Elsey Barnhart
Project Role: Project Coordinator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID): N/A
Nearest person month worked: 2
Contribution to Project: Ms. Barnhart attended planning meetings and has coordinated monthly team meetings. She performed work in preparing the study to launch, including assisting Ms. Nelson with testing study databases and assisting with the preparation of mail-out surveys.

Name: Melinda Gaddy, PhD
Project Role: Co-Investigator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID): N/A
Nearest person month worked: 1
Contribution to Project: Dr. Gaddy attended planning meetings and facilitated communications between KU and the VA. She collaborated with Drs. Oehlert and Swanson for the stratification analysis.

Funding Support: VA Eastern Kansas Healthcare System

Name: Sofia Mildrum Chana
Project Role: Research Assistant
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID): N/A
Nearest person month worked: 4
Contribution to Project: Ms. Mildrum Chana helped prepare the study to launch, including development of study tasks for research assistants and training of research assistants who will work on this grant. She recently graduated from her undergraduate studies and is no longer on the project

Name: Natalie Babich
Project Role: Research Assistant
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID): N/A
Nearest person month worked: 4
Contribution to Project: Ms. Babich helped prepare the study to launch, including development of study tasks for research assistants and training of research assistants who will work on this grant. She recently graduated from her undergraduate studies and is no longer on the project

Name: Angie Nordhus
Project Role: Grant Coordinator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID): N/A
Nearest person month worked: 12
Contribution to Project: No change.
Funding Support: Life Span Institute – University of Kansas

Has there been a change in the active other support of the PD/PI(s) or senior/key personnel since the last reporting period?

Nothing to report.

What other organizations were involved as partners?

Organization Name: VA Eastern Kansas Healthcare System

Location of Organization: Leavenworth, KS

Partner's contribution to the project: Collaboration

Organization Name: University of Notre Dame

Location of Organization: (if foreign location list country): Notre Dame, Indiana

Partner's contribution to the project (identify one or more): Collaboration

Organization Name: Purdue University

Location of Organization: (if foreign location list country): West Lafayette, Indiana

Partner's contribution to the project (identify one or more): Collaboration

8. SPECIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

COLLABORATIVE AWARDS: Not applicable.

QUAD CHARTS: Not applicable.

9. APPENDICES: Not applicable.