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TITLE: Effect of Diet on Gulf War Illness: A Pilot Study

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14. ABSTRACT The overall objective of the study is to determine the efficacy of a Low FODMAP (modified healthy) diet relative to a High FODMAP (typical healthy) diet in reducing the 1) Intestinal symptoms of Irritable Bowel Syndrome and 2) Non-intestinal symptoms (fatigue, joint pain, insomnia, general stiffness and headache) in Veterans with Gulf War Illness. We will also determine if the change in gut flora is a mechanism for improvement in symptoms of IBS and GW illness while on the study. We have screened 40 and enrolled 28, and 26 Gulf War Veterans have completed the study. Our efforts are ongoing to recruit more Gulf War veterans.					
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Introduction:

New onset of gastroenteritis during deployment is a risk factor for the development of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) after deployment. Gulf War (GW) Veterans with IBS are more likely to report fatigue, joint pains, general stiffness and headaches; symptoms that are indistinguishable from GW Illness. Diet is a major factor that influence gut bacteria along with gastroenteritis, travel, and stress factors which are relevant to GW Veterans. This suggests that foods as well as an alteration in intestinal microbiota are involved in the pathogenesis of IBS in GW Veterans.

The goal of this project is to compare a low FODMAP (modified healthy) diet to a high FODMAP (typical healthy) diet in Veterans with IBS and symptoms of GW illness. Both diets will be healthy.

Body:

During the past year the following goals were accomplished:

- During the last year, no patient was recruited due to COVID-19. The study coordinator left the job due to inactivity and found a better job doing contact tracing for COVID-19.
- So far, we have screened 40 Gulf War Veterans and have enrolled 30 from the beginning of the study. Ten Veterans were screen failed due to abnormal lab test or abdominal surgery. Of the 28 Veterans enrolled in the study, 26 have completed the study.
- Stool banking has been set up at the VA Medical Center, Salt Lake City where the screened and enrolled participants' samples have been banked.
- We have received the list of Gulf War Veterans in the Salt Lake City are from the Defense Manpower Database and from the National VA Informatics and Computing Infrastructure (VINCI).
- A senior study coordinator has agreed to help us re-start the study. She is already working on the study and we plan to hire a new study coordinator starting in January 2022.

Key Research Accomplishments.....

- Due to COVID-19 all research activities were halted. We have a senior study coordinator help us re-start the study.
- We enrolled two more patients. However, we discovered that the Nutrition Department at the Salt Lake City VAMC has shortage of staff and are not able to help us prepare and distribute the required diets.
- We have contacted the private vendors who may be able to prepare and distribute low FODMAP and normal healthy diet as per the protocol. We are looking at all the options prior to re-starting the study.

Reportable Outcomes.....

Nil

Conclusion:

Study was in the holding pattern during the last year due to COVID-19. We have re-started the study and plan to enroll Veterans in this study from January 2022.

References.....

Nil.

Appendices.....

Nil.