

VISN 5 MIRECC Research Abstract

Evaluating a Bio-Terrorism Education Tool Howard Schulman, PhD

Objective: This project focuses on developing and evaluating an educational campaign aimed at reducing veterans' current anxiety about a future bio-terrorism occurrence and minimizing the psychological consequences if such a disaster was to occur. The study is a collaborative effort of VA centers involving six VISNs. The effectiveness of the educational materials will be evaluated on: (1) improving veterans' knowledge, (2) decreasing levels of current anxiety, (3) improving a plan for developing coping mechanisms to be used in such a disaster and (4) improving confidence in VHA's ability to meet the health care needs of veterans in the event of a bio-terrorism attack.

Research Design: In the first phase of the study, the educational materials were developed. During the second phase of the study these materials will be evaluated among veterans using VHA care and those receiving compensation benefits but not utilizing VHA care.

Methodology: The educational materials were developed using several methodologies, including focus groups and an expert panel. The second phase will consist of evaluating the materials using different units of randomization, two intervention groups and a non-intervention comparison group, with pretest and posttest data gathered on the same units.