



GRECCs: Clinical Innovations Benefitting Veterans of All Ages in All Settings

...what follows is a small sampling from over one hundred clinical innovations and demonstrations currently underway in VHA's Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Centers (GRECCs).

Cleveland GRECC's Geriatric Emergency Room: Older Veterans represent about 45% of the patients seen in VA emergency rooms and generate many revisits and admissions. "GERI-VET" adds a comprehensive geriatric evaluation (CGE) performed by "intermediate care technicians" (former military corpsmen) to ER visits for Veterans older than age 75. Follow-up to address issues identified through the CGE is intended to prevent ER revisits and hospital readmissions. Over 250 Veterans have participated in GERI-VET to date outcomes confirm the program's effectiveness in reducing rates of hospitalizations and ED re-visitations in this high-risk group.

Tennessee Valley GRECC Improves Care in Intensive Care Units through:

- Their **ABCDE delirium prevention bundle** results in less time on ventilators, 50% delirium reduction, 30% mortality reduction, more than a two-fold reduction in long term cognitive impairment, and reduced ICU and hospital lengths of stay. ABCDE achieves these impressive results by employing **A**wakening and **B**reathing trials through **C**oordinated efforts of nursing and respiratory therapy; **D**elirium surveillance, prevention, and treatment; and **E**arly mobilization and ambulation.
- The **THRIVE ICU Support Group**: served ICU survivors and family members in 33 sessions offered October 2016 - July 2017. Of those surveyed, 93% felt emotionally supported, 91% learned from others, 77% now understand common situations related to prolonged ICU stay, 86% would strongly recommend group participation to a friend, and 42% expressed interest in volunteering to provide peer support to others
- **ICU Diaries** were kept by 29 staff in 2017. On a 100-point scale, diary knowledge increased from 38.8 to 71.85, belief that diaries are beneficial rose from 62.74 to 76, and comfort level with educating family from 44.4 to 78.46. Benefits noted included increased family engagement, enhanced communication, and an enriched frame of reference for hospitalization.

Puget Sound GRECC: Memory Support for Older Adults with Post-Traumatic

Stress Disorder [PTSD] (MSOAP) provided an outpatient PTSD group the means to enhance memory skills and PTSD self-management. Alterations of attention/memory are among the diagnostic criteria for PTSD, and is a risk factor for dementia in older Veterans. After participating in the groups, questionnaires assessed PTSD symptoms, cognitive complaints, sense of self-efficacy, satisfaction with the group experience and materials, feedback on group improvement and indices of quality of life. Analyses demonstrate overall satisfaction, decreased depressive symptoms, no increase in PTSD symptoms, and increased sense of self-efficacy.

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Delirium Risk Evaluation and Management

Our Perioperative Optimization of Senior Health (POSH) was recently awarded 125k for a new POSH related project: Delirium Risk Evaluation and Management (POSH-DREAM)

In 2015, the Perioperative Optimization of Senior Health (POSH) program was launched through the Durham VAMC GRECC with support from the Office of Academic Affiliations and Specialty Care Transformation. The overarching goal of the POSH program is to improve surgical outcomes in older Veterans, while optimizing the efficiency of the perioperative clinical processes, as well as providing inter-professional educational opportunities for VHA trainees.

The DREAM project will refocus resources and modernize our existing presurgical screening processes for cognitive and mental health issue via hand held devices to improve delirium risk stratification and postoperative delirium identification and ultimately lead to optimized pre-/postoperative care planning for our older Veterans, their caregivers and VHA intensive care unit staff.

Project objectives include:

Objective 1: Optimize and modernize preoperative screening of cognitive status and psychiatric distress in older Veterans undergoing general surgery

Objective 2: Enhance postoperative detection, monitoring and management of delirium and psychiatric distress in older Veterans undergoing general surgery.

Stay tuned for an outcome update in December 2018.

