



US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
BLAST INJURY RESEARCH PROGRAM
COORDINATING OFFICE

Quality of Life

Long-Term Quality of Life Outcomes in Injured Tri-Service US Service Members: The WWRP

The long-term effects of blast-related injuries and diagnoses are not well understood. To better understand the consequences of these combat injuries on Service Members' long-term health and readiness, the NHRC in San Diego, California, is longitudinally assessing clinical, rehabilitative, and quality-of-life outcomes in injured US Service Members. This project, named the WWRP, is being conducted with funding support from the Navy BUMED under the Wounded, Ill, and Injured Program and the EACE. Each of the more than 55,000 Service Members injured in Iraq and Afghanistan beginning in October 2001 are currently being contacted and invited to participate in the WWRP. The WWRP is a 15-year, longitudinal, prospective, population-based survey study of injured Service Members, with surveys being administered every six months to gauge physical health, mental health, and quality-of-life outcomes. To date, 3,711 injured Service Members have provided informed consent and enrolled in the study and over 910,000 survey responses have been collected. Approximately 79 percent of respondents were injured in a blast event. In all respondents, injuries to the head and spine are associated with worsened psychosocial outcomes. Future follow-up surveys will integrate more specific measures of interest, including pain and social support, and prosthetic use/satisfaction in the amputee population. These discrete measures may provide insight into the nexus between quality-of-life and specific target areas of concern as well as focus on severe blast injuries. This study is being conducted predominantly online, with supplemental telephone and paper surveys for those Service Members who cannot respond online. The public-facing website can be viewed at: www.wwrecoveryproject.org .

WWRP is the first and only initiative to longitudinally study injured Service Members and examine their long-term physical health, mental health, and quality-of-life outcomes after combat injury. By assessing long-term QOL outcomes, NHRC, EACE, DoD, and the VA can evaluate those clinical treatments, rehabilitative programs, and prosthetics/orthotics that are actually moving the QOL meter for injured Service Members and those that are not. This not only results in immediate and real improvement in the quality of care delivered, but also in immense cost savings now and throughout the lifetime of care that many of these Service Members will require. The WWRP continues to produce manuscripts, presentations, technical reports, and recommendations.



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