VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Program

The mission of Veterans Affairs (VA) Research is fourfold:

• Improve veterans’ health and well-being via basic, translational, clinical, health services, and rehabilitative research.
• Apply scientific knowledge to develop effective individualized care solutions for veterans.
• Attract, train, and retain the highest-caliber investigators, and nurture their development as leaders in their fields.
• Assure a culture of professionalism, collaboration, accountability, and the highest regard for research volunteers’ safety and privacy.

Examples of Neuroscience in VA Medical Research

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

• The Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center reported nearly 414,000 TBIs among U.S. service members worldwide between 2000 and 2019.¹
• Neuroscience researchers are developing improved methods to assess the effectiveness of treatments.
• VA’s TBI Model System, a collaboration with the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, examines the recovery course and outcomes of veterans and active-duty service members with TBI following rehabilitation.

Substance Use Disorders

• About 9 percent of Americans over the age of 18 have a non-tobacco substance use disorder. Among in-service members and veterans, substance use disorders co-occur and complicate additional health conditions.²
• VA supports research studying prevention, screening, and treatment of substance use disorders.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

• According to the National Center for PTSD the prevalence of PTSD in Veterans who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan is about 11–20%.³
• In 2013, VA and the Department of Defense announced the two departments were committing more than $100 million to fund two new consortia specifically aimed at improving diagnosis and treatment of PTSD.
• The VA has developed evidence-based treatments for PTSD, ranging from cognitive processing therapy to prolonged exposure therapy.
• In 2016, neuroscience researchers found there are effective treatments for veterans with both PTSD and TBI.
Sources

1. https://www.research.va.gov/topics/tbi.cfm
2. https://www.research.va.gov/topics/sud.cfm

The Society for Neuroscience (SIN) is a nonprofit membership organization of around 30,000 scientists and physicians who study the brain and nervous system. Visit SIN.org or email advocacy@sfn.org to learn more.