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Contact: Doris Ryan
301-319-9378
doris.m.ryan.civ@mail.mil

Navy Researchers Study Urogenital Health in Deployed Service Members

KISSIMMEE, Florida – With nearly 275,000 women having deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and now being allowed into combat roles, researchers discussed current efforts to understand the health needs of female service members in a deployed environment at the Military Health System Research Symposium, Aug. 15

The presentation, “In-Theater Utilization of Medical Services for Common Urogenital Issues in Deployed Male and Female Service Members,” by scientists at the Naval Health Research Center (NHRC), one of Navy Medicine’s eight laboratories, discussed recent research that addressed health care utilization rates and lost duty days for deployed men and women with common conditions such as urinary tract infections (UTI) and candidiasis.

“The study analyzed data from military health databases from 2008 to 2013 and used International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9) codes to calculate clinic utilization rates for deployed male and female service members who sought medical care for urogenital concerns as well as lost duty days,” said Michael Galarneau, director of operational readiness at NHRC. “By conducting these types of analyses about health concerns and impact on readiness, we can ensure that military leaders have the best information available to shape their decision-making when it comes to the care and treatment of our warfighters.”

Findings showed that while health care visits for the common genitourinary issues studies for both male and female service members were low, they were higher for deployed female service members compared to their male counterparts. In terms of lost duty days, the total estimated number of days lost for female service members over the six-year period was over 6,000 while the estimated number of days lost for active duty males was nearly 2,000.

“Lost duty time, especially in a deployed setting, at the very least, reduces unit readiness,” said Galarneau. “While this study, led by Dr. Mary Clouser the senior epidemiologist in NHRC’s operational readiness directorate, looked at the incidence of in-theater genitourinary conditions irrespective of gender. Knowing the magnitude and intensity of the effect of lost duty days on performance gives military medical planners critical information to make informed decisions on training and the medical materiel necessary to keep the force at maximum readiness.”

Navy Medicine's research and development laboratories engage in a broad spectrum of activity from basic laboratory science to field studies at sites in remote areas of the world and in operational environments. Research topics include infectious diseases; biological warfare detection and defense; combat casualty care; environment health concerns; bone marrow research and registry; aerospace and undersea medicine; medical modeling, simulation and operational mission support; and epidemiology and behavioral sciences. The capabilities and global reach reflect the broad mission of Navy Medicine's Research and Development Enterprise.





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