

South Central MIRECC Communiqué

A publication of the Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center

November 1, 2004

Vol 6, No. 11

Published monthly by the South Central (VISN 16) MIRECC Education Core

“Closing the efficacy-effectiveness gap”

Director’s Desk:

DR. SULLIVAN RETURNS FROM STUDYING PSYCHOTROPIC HERBS IN SOUTH AMERICA

Greer Sullivan, MD, MPH, MIRECC Director

Now that I have your attention...

I want to take this opportunity to say hello to everyone involved in the South Central MIRECC and to let you know that I am glad to be back from my sabbatical! I feel so fortunate that we have such strong leadership in the MIRECC. Without that leadership I could not have even considered taking time away. In my absence, Michael Kauth did a superb job as Acting Director. I have received glowing reports about his leadership from too-numerous-to-count sources, both in our VISN and nationally. Also, I am certain that my absence placed extra demands on the other MIRECC Associate Directors, Jennifer Vasterling and JoAnn Kirchner. In addition, Rick Owen, Kathy Henderson, Debbie Hadsel, and Melonie Shelton helped out in so many ways, especially in keeping things going locally here in Little Rock. I want to thank all of you!

What can I say about taking a sabbatical? My advice to anyone would be that if you get a chance to take one, don’t hesitate a second – DO IT! My fantasy about a sabbatical has always been that I would go to some exotic place and learn something new and fascinating, such as studying psychotropic herbs in South America or understanding the mental health of aboriginal tribes of Australia. But, even though I spent most of my time in familiar places (Little Rock and Los Angeles) and even though I studied a very tame topic (qualitative research), I was extremely pleased with my sabbatical.

The most important things I learned from taking this time away were not things I planned to learn. I had spent about 20 years in academics without taking any significant amount of time off. I learned that I was more “burned out” than I knew and that resting and taking better care of myself is vital. I had time to think about what was important in my life and my career. I actually started to feel excited again about my work and more appreciative than ever for having the opportunity to participate in and lead the MIRECC.

So... here we go! We are “revving” up for our next big MIRECC challenge: our first major review by national VA leadership. I am very optimistic about this review because I am certain we are doing a good job, thanks to the hard work of all of you. I look forward to seeing you all in person as soon as possible.

Revised proposals for MIRECC Clinical Education Grants are **due by 4:00 PM CT November 12, 2004**. Please submit your proposal to Dr. Burke at Randy.burke@med.va.gov

Upcoming Educational Events

Satellite Broadcast on Returning Soldiers

The VA Employee Education System, Washington Resource Center, in collaboration with Social Work Service is pleased to announce rebroadcast of a satellite program titled: *Highlights of the USSW Conference in May to Understand Problems of Soldiers Returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom and to Utilize Interagency Efforts to Facilitate their Reintegration Back into Society*. Benefits of viewing the broadcast include more effective planning of care and provision of social work services. For a full description of the program, handouts, and broadcast times and dates, please go to http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu_detail.asp?id=18838

No MIRECC web presentation in November



Baylor-MIRECC Psychopharmacology Conference a Success

The annual Baylor College of Medicine Psychopharmacology Update was held at the Houstonian Hotel, October 16-17, 2004. Lauren B. Marangell, MD, Brown Foundation Professor, Psychopharmacology of Mood Disorders at Baylor College of Medicine and co-Director of the PRECEP served as the program director. The South Central MIRECC co-sponsored this meeting and paid registration for MIRECC Affiliates. A total of 216 physicians from 23 states attended the program and heard many excellent speakers. James M. Martinez, MD, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Baylor College of Medicine, presented a lecture titled "New Data for Clinicians in the Treatment of Bipolar Disorder." He also presented on "Laboratory Monitoring in Psychiatry – When to Do It and What Does It Mean." Dr. Marangell lectured on "What Clinicians Need to Know About Psychotropics and Suicide" and "The Expanding Armamentarium of Devices in the Treatment of Mood Disorders: TMS, MST, VNS, and BPECT." Matthew J. Friedman, MD, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry and Pharmacology, Dartmouth Medical School, presented an "Update on the Psychopharmacology of PTSD." Madhukar H. Trivedi, MD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Texas, Southwestern Medical School, discussed "What We've Learned About Sequenced Treatment for Patients With Resistant Depression – STAR-D." Lesley M. Arnold, MD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, presented an "Update on the Evaluation and Treatment of Fibromyalgia." James W. Jefferson, MD, Distinguished Senior Scientist at Madison Institute of Medicine, discussed "Depression and Men." And finally, Glen O. Gabbard, MD, Brown Foundation Chair of Psychoanalysis, Baylor College of Medicine, talked about "The Psychopharmacology of Personality Disorders."

Planning for the 2005 Psychopharmacology Update has begun! Make plans to attend. You do not want to miss this meeting.

Looking for Clinical Tools for your Practice?

Visit the South Central MIRECC web site (www.va.gov/scmirecc/), click on "Information for Providers." Go to "Education," then click on "Clinical Education Products." To request a product, send an email to Allen.thomas3@med.va.gov

New MIRECC Staff MIRECC Fellow Studies Language and PTSD

Recently, **Scott A. Cardin, Ph.D.**, joined the South Central MIRECC Fellowship Program. Dr. Cardin received his doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology at Texas A&M University, College Station after completing an internship at the University of Houston. He completed an MS in Counseling Psychology at the University of Kansas, Lawrence in 1998 and a BA in Psychology at the University of Missouri, Columbia in 1996.

Dr. Cardin's recent work has focused on examining how shared metaphoric language (used by both the therapist and client) positively influences the therapeutic relationship within the therapy dyad, thereby making a positive outcome in therapy more likely. Metaphoric language is often used when describing psychological processes, states of being, or prognoses such as when a patient describes his or her experience of being depressed as being "*lost*" or "*shattered*." This metaphoric description is meaningful and can be quite therapeutic if examined / monitored in session. His other research efforts have examined how spoken language causes emotional states and unconsciously regulates how we think and behave, such as how certain figures of speech containing content that is violent (for example, "I needed that gift from you *like I needed a hole in the head*") might serve the purpose of either initiating and / or maintaining intimidation and a hostile atmosphere. Several studies have demonstrated a relationship between the underlying conceptual metaphors used by clients when describing their problems and emotional states and corresponding change processes. For example, the metaphors used to describe a patient's experience of

being depressed correlates with therapy outcome. Acknowledgment of or focus on spoken language can be an indirect measure for change and can also be explored directly in a therapeutic manner.

Dr. Cardin's current research interest rests in the relationship between underlying conceptual belief structures (as measured by the language used) and PTSD treatment and the prognosis for change. Specifically, he is interested in identifying the ways that veterans understand and experience their mental health, treatment barriers, and ways of producing positive change. The goal is to identify patients' underlying conceptual beliefs about PTSD (symptoms, barriers to treatment, and prognosis for change) while allowing the therapists to better form a good therapeutic alliance during therapy and improve the odds for successful treatment.

In addition to being a MIRECC Fellow, Dr. Cardin has been married for three years and has one son, five months old, named Ethan. Hobbies include biking, Frisbee-golf, reading, and watching his son grow.

Program Coordinator In NOLA

Last month, **Allen Thomas, Ph.D.**, joined the MIRECC staff as Education and Research Program Coordinator. He will be involved in many of the MIRECC's education and research activities. Dr. Thomas is located at the New Orleans VA Medical Center. He received his PhD in Health Education at the University of Texas at Austin.

You may reach Dr. Thomas via email at Allen.Thomas3@med.va.gov or 504-568-0811 x3704.

New MIRECCs Funded for Suicidality and Post-Deployment Adjustment

On September 3, 2004, VA Central Office announced funding of new MIRECCs in VISN 6 and VISN 19. This announcement followed a competitive application process and review. The new MIRECCs address critical topics in veterans' health care. The VISN 6 MIRECC focuses on post-deployment mental illness and adjustment. Gregory McCarthy, Ph.D., is the Director and is located in Durham, NC. The VISN 19 MIRECC focuses on suicidality and suicide prevention. Lawrence Adler, M.D., is the Director and is located in Denver, CO. Watch the national MIRECC web site for more information (www.mirecc.med.va.gov).

Funding Opportunities

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) invites high quality, public health relevant health economics research grant applications to develop more efficient and equitable mechanisms of financing mental health services. The purpose of this program announcement is to encourage investigator-initiated research on mental health economics in order to further advance this scientific knowledge base which can assist finding and applying innovative strategies for financing and reimbursing mental health care. The research invited under this program announcement is also intended to maintain the contribution of applied economic analysis to the integration and expansion of psychiatric care into non-specialty settings and to enhance interdisciplinary approaches to scientific inquiry. For more information, go to <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-05-008.html>

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), and the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) invite research grant applications to conduct services research on co-occurring mental illness, alcohol and/or drug abuse, and commonly co-occurring medical conditions. The size and duration of each award will vary. For more information, go to <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-05-007.html>

November Conference Calls 1-800-767-1750

- 1—Education Core, 2:00 PM CT, *cancelled; reviewing grants on a separate call*
- 1—Schizophrenia Team, 3:00 PM CT, access code 20061#
- 9—Directors Call, 3:00 PM CT, access code 19356#
- 10—Neuroimaging Group, 9:00 AM CT, access code 24394#
- 15—Disorder Team Leaders, 2:00 PM CT, access code 20143#
- 16—Substance Abuse Team, General, 1:00 PM CT, access code 23400#
- 17—Program Assistants, 2:00 PM CT, access code 43593#
- 22—PRECEP Call, 11:00 AM CT, access code 39004#
- 23—Directors Call, 3:00 PM CT, access code 19356#

The next issue of the *South Central MIRECC Communiqué* will be published December 6, 2004. Deadline for submission of items to the December newsletter is November 30. Urgent items may be submitted for publication in the *Communiqué Newsflash* at any time. Email items to the Editor, Michael R. Kauth, Ph.D., at Michael.Kauth@med.va.gov or FAX to (504) 585-2954.

South Central MIRECC Internet site: www.va.gov/scmirecc/

SC MIRECC intranet site: vaww.visn16.med.va.gov/mirecc.htm

National MIRECC Internet site: www.mirecc.med.va.gov