



US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
BLAST INJURY RESEARCH PROGRAM
COORDINATING OFFICE

Education and Clinical Tools

Validation of Efficacy of NiCoE's Four-week Interdisciplinary Program for TBI Patients

NiCoE recently conducted an internal study of their four-week interdisciplinary program for TBI patients who have not improved with standard medical care. In FY14, NiCoE focused on taking their already developed and practiced interdisciplinary model and employing it in an Integrated Practice Unit (IPU) setting. As an IPU, NiCoE organizes its practices around the needs of the customer and the patient population. In healthcare, that requires a shift from organizations that are divided by medical specialty to ones that structure interdisciplinary teams around the patient's medical condition. In this IPU, NiCoE personnel work together as an interdisciplinary team toward a common goal: maximizing the patient's overall outcome as efficiently as possible. Patients and their families receive more than 100 provider encounters throughout the course of their treatment, benefiting from specialized imaging and clinical equipment; patients also participate in individual, group, and family programs. To evaluate patient care, researchers and clinicians at NiCoE collected a variety of standardized rating scales on over 400 patients. There were significant decreases in symptom severity across a variety of neurological and behavioral health parameters during the patients' stay at NiCoE. Service Members responded positively, supporting the need for an interdisciplinary care model and improved classification of TBI and psychological health patients. In the NiCoE program, Service Members identified skills and activities associated with recovery, including yoga, acupuncture, biofeedback, and other treatment options. Using validated rating scales to document the program's effectiveness is consistent with recommendations from the IOM's report on PTSD care within DoD and VA systems.