



US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
BLAST INJURY RESEARCH PROGRAM
COORDINATING OFFICE

Neurocognitive Function and Psychological Health Balad/Bagram Longitudinal Assessment of the Symptoms of TBI/PTSD

The lack of collaboration between neurologist and psychologists has been one of the greatest shortcomings of this area of research, and is a large part of the rationale behind this study sponsored by the USAF and performed by the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. The study was separated into three different phases: Phase I—Retrospective Study of Archival Clinical Data: Conduct retrospective evaluation of TBI/PTSD clinical assessment data already collected on 700 Blast patients at Balad; Phase II—Prospective Study: Convene experts to analyze data to disentangle symptoms of TBI/PTSD assessment battery and conduct prospective study of the assessment battery in Afghanistan; Phase III—Follow-up assessment study: Conduct 12-month follow-up evaluations of study participants; reconvene the panel of experts to develop a recommended decision tree for treating patients with TBI/PTSD. Recruitment for Phase II was halted due to the on-site neuropsychologist being transferred to another location. A replacement neuropsychologist was not provided, thus recruitment for the patients who suffer from TBI was forced to be closed, three months earlier than planned. Other factors that contributed to the limited number of participants that were recruited include a lull in the fighting season during the winter and a reduction in military personnel due to the upcoming withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. It was determined that the recruitment goal for this study would not be met; however, the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio continued follow-ups with enrollees. A final report was submitted for the in-theater Phase II protocol in June. In April 2014 the Cooperative Agreement provided a No-Cost Extension to May 2015. The final report for Phase I is in preparation.