



Women's Health Research at Yale News Release YALE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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Veterans Administration Funds Major Study of Women Returning From Combat

Women's Health Research at Yale Investigators Lead the Collaborative Research Team

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New Haven, Conn. - A new nationwide study to determine whether there are gender differences in how female and male military combat veterans readjust to civilian life – one of the first empirical studies of its kind – has begun, thanks to a \$2.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The principal investigator for the study, Rani Desai, Ph.D., M.P.H., who is a Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Care (MIRECC) investigator at the VA CT Healthcare System, is also associate professor of psychiatry at Yale School of Medicine and director of the Women and Trauma research core of *Women's Health Research at Yale*.

The nationwide investigation is a collaborative effort that includes researchers from the VA, *Women's Health Research at Yale*, and the University of Connecticut.

This major new study grew out of a \$15,000 pilot grant awarded to Carolyn M. Mazure, Ph.D., Director of *Women's Health Research at Yale*, by The Grace J. Fippinger Foundation. The pilot study, which began in September 2009, recruited men and women combat veterans and was able to generate the necessary feasibility data for a large, comprehensive grant proposal.

“This represents a fabulous synergy with a Connecticut foundation that saw the importance of this work and gave us the opportunity to initiate this study. Thanks to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, we are now collaborating to investigate a major health concern for female military combat veterans,” said Mazure, who is also a Yale professor of psychiatry and psychology.

Mazure, along with Sherry McKee, Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry at Yale, and Crystal Park, Ph.D., professor of psychology at UConn, is working with Desai on the studies.

Of the 2 million Americans who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001, approximately 230,000 have been women, and an unprecedented number of these women have been in combat. Current Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans therefore include the largest cadre of U.S. military women exposed to combat to date.

There has been concern that women veterans are more susceptible to post-traumatic stress disorder than men, given similar experiences. There also has been some concern that the trauma women experience in combat may be compounded because women on average enter the military having had more civilian trauma than men and may suffer trauma at the hands of their comrades more than male veterans. However, none of this speculation has been investigated with empirical studies until now.