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NORTH FLORIDA/SOUTH GEORGIA VETERANS HEALTH SYSTEM

VA Research Newsletter

Informatics/Data Science Edition

FROM THE CHIEF OF RESEARCH



An important goal of NF/SGVHS Research Service is to expand our portfolio of VA informatics and data science studies, in order to improve healthcare delivery, enhance health outcomes, reduce costs, and support operational efficiency. In this newsletter we highlight some key personnel and resources involved in this initiative. We are also happy to announce a pilot funding opportunity for informatics and data science research!

-David Clark, Associate Chief of Staff for Research Service

FEATURED INVESTIGATOR



Dr. Wei-Hsuan "Jenny" Lo-Ciganic has been a Research Health Scientist at the Geriatrics Research Education Clinical Center (GRECC), Malcom Randall VAMC, since September 2023. She is a Professor at the University of Pittsburgh's Division of General Internal Medicine and Department of Biomedical Informatics and a core investigator at the Center for Pharmaceutical Policy and Prescribing (CP3) and the Center for Clinical Artificial Intelligence (CCAI). She also holds a Courtesy Professorship at the University of Florida College of Pharmacy. As an experienced pharmacist, pharmacoepidemiologist, and biostatistician, her research focuses on pharmacoepidemiology, machine learning, and health services. Her work spans two main areas: (1) applying machine learning to improve drug safety and predict high-risk patients, and (2) using advanced analytics to study medication non-adherence and drug use patterns to enhance patient outcomes. She is currently the PI of the NIH R01 "DEMONSTRATE" project, to implement a machine-learning opioid prediction tool into electronic health records (EHR) system at UF Health. She also contributes to VA-funded projects on hospital falls and PRN blood pressure medication use and is a key investigator on a NIH-funded R01 applying machine learning to suicide risk prediction for Veterans. Dr. Lo-Ciganic has been a lead lecturer for "Introduction to Machine Learning" at International Society of Pharmaceutical Outcomes and Research (ISPOR) conferences since 2020. In 2023, she received the ISPOR Health Economics and Outcomes Research (HEOR) Excellence-Application Award.

FEATURED RESEARCH STAFF



Dr. Xinping Wang is the Informatics Data Manager and Analyst for Research Service. For the past 21 years, he has provided expertise in data joining, matching, extraction, cleaning, and analysis for research projects using SAS and SQL Server. Dr. Wang is familiar working with data structures in the VA Informatics and Computing Infrastructure (VINCI) and VA Data Access Request Tracker (DART). He works with Principal Investigators in writing their research proposals, defining study cohorts, joining SQL Server tables, matching study cohort subjects to extract VA data, and using SAS to create analytic files and variables. Dr. Wang also works extensively on requesting and merging Medicare and Medicaid databases for Veteran and non-veteran dual use research. He is currently managing more than 10 research projects on the VINCI data server.

MILLION VETERAN PROGRAM



VA's Million Veteran Program (MVP) is a national research program looking at how genes, lifestyle, military experiences, and exposures affect health and wellness in Veterans. MVP is the nation's largest biorepository of Veteran data and is one of the most diverse cohorts of any genetic research program in the world. It involves more than 700 researchers across the nation, including our local site which is led by Dr. Sriram. Studying genes can help answer many health-related questions, such as why some people develop certain health problems that others don't, why some people respond better to certain treatments, and why some people experience adverse reactions to medication while others do not. Veterans who join MVP are asked to complete surveys about health, lifestyle habits, military experience, and medical history, and to provide a blood sample for genetic analysis. MVP also requests access to health records on an ongoing basis. Since launching in 2011, over 1 million Veterans have joined MVP. MVP genomic and phenotypic data is available to researchers through VA-funded research projects and select non-VA federal funding such as NIH awards.

PILOT GRANT OPPORTUNITY



We are excited to announce a pilot grant opportunity for NF/SGVHS or UF researchers in the areas of clinical informatics and data science. This opportunity will support innovative projects that leverage the national VA Electronic Health Record system, Corporate Data Warehouse, and VA Informatics and Computing Infrastructure. The VA Electronic Health Record system is a comprehensive, national, population-based database, making it an invaluable resource for researchers seeking to investigate detailed health-related questions with large sample sizes and high statistical power. For full details please click [here](#). We look forward to discussing your interest in VA data!

VA RESEARCH SERVICE BY THE NUMBERS

Clinical Studies

101

Human subject and
medical record research



Proportion of Clinical and
Preclinical Research Studies

Preclinical Studies

22

Animal and bench research

Principal Investigators

49

With active projects

Research Staff and Administrative Staff

46

Research Affiliates

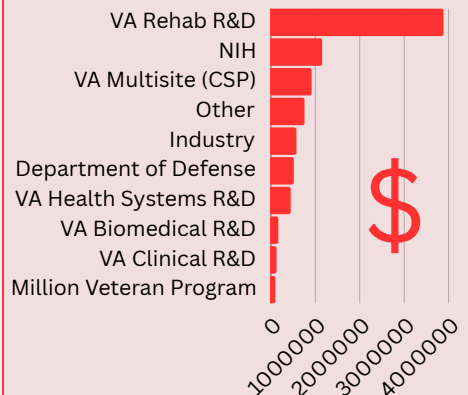
171

Interagency agreements or
non-compensated employees
(UF and NFFRE personnel)

Annual Research Expenditures

**\$9.7
million**

Fiscal Year 2023



Projects funded by US Department of Veterans Affairs

26

FY25, Year to Date

Research Space: Square Feet

30,287

Research Space: # Rooms

160

Research Equipment

1,367

Pieces of equipment