Title:
Conducting Ethical Research With Veterans

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Session Title:
Ethical Considerations of Veteran- and Military Family-Focused Academic and Research Initiatives
Slot:
F 04: Friday, 28 July 2017: 2:30 PM-3:45 PM
Scheduled Time:
3:10 PM

Keywords:
ethics, research and veterans

References:
45 CFR 46


Abstract Summary:
Military veterans have lived within a unique culture. Research participants with this background may have additional points of vulnerability that need to be considered for the ethical conduct of research.

Learning Activity:

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<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Discuss the unique cultural forces that shape military veteran context.</td>
<td>1. Discuss relevant military cultural and community based research background.</td>
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<td>2. Identify key veteran related issues associated with the ethical principles and applications for conducting research.</td>
<td>2. Using the recognized principles of Beneficence, Justice and Respect for Persons, discuss the ethical purpose, design, implementation and dissemination of research involving veterans.</td>
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<td>3. Discuss KBA framework for ethical conduct of research.</td>
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Abstract Text:

Background: Considered a vulnerable and underserved population, veterans have a unique relationship with research. While on active duty, they are subject of constant data collection. Most of that data is collected and maintained within the Department of Defense and is not for public use. This creates a unique Federal big data repository. The unique nature of the repository lies in the contextual homogeneity of the participants e.g. all are employed, have a minimum of a high school education with additional training and consistent access to health care, food and housing. Finally, all are expected to maintain physical fitness standards. Very little information on working with veterans exists outside of this Federal system.

The 22 million US veterans have experienced military training, deployments, and they speak with a unique lexicon. Ethos, duty, and commitment to mission are lived values. This background does not get packed away when the individual leaves the service. Given that only 7% of the American population has served in the military, it is reasonable to assume that many researchers do not have an exposure to the lived experience of military life. That lack of exposure can lead to flawed assumptions that can skew findings. Additionally, barriers exist to veteran involvement in research. Those barriers include but are not limited to incentive issues, concerns regarding repercussions, bureaucracy, maintaining security clearance status and post military employment.

A way to involve veterans in research while addressing potential ethical conflicts draws from community based research methods. These principles hold several key components for ethical conduct with populations from different backgrounds. The primary principle would be to utilize military veterans as partners in all phases of design and analysis. Consider using KBA format:

Know where your expertise (real and contextual) ends

Be specific in your question and purpose

Ask Recruit Involve veterans.
With that format and the principles of Beneficence, Justice and Respect for Persons. Starting with the research question, think through the impact and meaning to veteran(s), beneficiary or current active duty. The design, implementation and analysis of research should respect dignity while avoiding undue exposure and coercion. Working with veterans can create a more ethical and robust expansion of science that benefits all of society.