

AT THE FOREFRONT



Physicians interested in sleep disorder research will be impressed by the robust programs and specialization opportunities that the U.S. Army offers. Intensive research opportunities include understanding associated illnesses like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and coronary heart disease, as well as other potential physical effects that can include obesity, anxiety and impaired motor skills. This research helps our Soldiers and can eventually benefit the private sector of medicine as well.

INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

The U.S. Army's integrated health care system and large patient base allow researchers to follow groups of patients over time to assess the effectiveness of treatments and outcomes, which can benefit private sector medicine as well. The following are just a few of our research projects.

- A study of Soldiers within a single combat brigade defined and measured the effects of short duration sleep up to 100 days after redeployment. This was the first study to document the effects of a cohesive unit over such time.
- An abstract on the surgical treatment of sleep apnea was published by *Sleep Medicine*. U.S. Army sleep medicine physicians found that maxilla-mandibular advancement surgery can cure sleep apnea in many patients. More than half of the Soldiers had significantly reduced symptoms, and 43 percent had no signs of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) at all after undergoing the procedure.
- A collaborative project with the Center for Neuroscience and Regenerative Medicine is looking at biomarkers for traumatic brain injury (TBI), PTSD and sleep disorders. This may lead to a blood test that could more efficiently diagnose TBI and sleep disorders.
- Madigan Healthcare System and Telehealth/Telemedicine researchers are exploring the potential uses of a newly developed smart phone breathing application and how it can help Soldiers improve sleep disorders with relaxed breathing exercises.

ARMY MEDICINE IS MAKING NEW STRIDES IN SLEEP DISORDER TREATMENT.

OUTSTANDING FACILITIES

The U.S. Army operates three accredited sleep disorder centers, employing 26 sleep medicine specialists who evaluate tens of thousands of patients each year.

- The Walter Reed Army Sleep Disorder Center in Washington, D.C., is among the largest academic sleep labs in the country. It has 18 beds and conducts more than 6,500 sleep studies per year. As an Academic Center of Excellence and Distinction, it offers an accredited fellowship.
- Madigan Healthcare System, located at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, Wash., conducts 1,000 sleep studies each year in a four-bed sleep lab.
- Tripler Army Medical Center's Sleep Disorders Center, located in Honolulu, Hawaii, earned accreditation from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine in 2012, becoming the Army's third facility to receive this accreditation.

OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE

Army physicians involved in sleep disorder research attend and present at the annual SLEEP conference, take part in ongoing studies and publish articles to relevant journals. While physicians in general practice may treat sleep disorders with various medicines as a sideline, Army physicians can specialize in this area, enjoying the many resources and comprehensive treatment options available at our designated facilities.

In addition, a U.S. Army physician has the potential to hold an administrative leadership position, actively conduct research and have a clinical practice - gaining these opportunities more quickly than would be possible outside the military.

The Army's innovative research in sleep medicine is just one example of the numerous ways in which our team is advancing health care. Across many different disciplines, we're leading the way - while offering physicians opportunities to explore specific areas that interest them and grow their careers.

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