Ethical Considerations for Nursing Research with Military Populations

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BACKGROUND
• Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) funded 116,631 studies FY92-17.
• $14.7 Billion = CDMRP research funds FY92-19
• Increased military healthcare research opportunities avail for academic, industry, interagency research collaborations with partners who may be unfamiliar with the military culture, and unique military research process requirements.

PROBLEM
• Critical ethical considerations can be overlooked and may pose increased risks or significant delays in the research process.
• Noted Gaps:
  • Published literature outlining unique requirements for conducting research with military populations.
  • Civilian/novice PI knowledge/experience with DoD and service-specific regulatory processes.
  • Civilian/novice PI military cultural competency.
• Understanding the ethical considerations unique to military populations are critical for guiding civilian research partners and providing safeguards and protections for our military research participants.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Nursing Research Ethics Process Model for Military Populations

RESEARCH PLAN
• Training and command permissions requirements?
• Who is the designated PI? External studies with civilian partners require a military site PI.
• Ombudsman or research monitor required?
• Military-related vulnerabilities to consider:
  • Rank disparity, cognitive impairment (TBI), physical disabilities (wounded warriors)
  • What accommodations may be needed for recruitment and informed consent processes?
  • Any impact of participation on the member’s duty performance must be spelled out in the protocol.
• Additional approvals may be required to grant permission for military member participation.
• Familiarity with military regulations dealing with permissible compensations is recommended.
• Will a survey, questionnaire, or interview require information collections control application/approval?

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS
• Are any participants distressed?
• How will safeguards be activated?
• Will health information be disclosed to a commander?

RESULTS
Due to the nature and mission of the military, additional reviews and approvals are necessary before submission of presentations and manuscripts for public release. (Public Affairs, Legal approvals)

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