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TITLE: Effect of Diet on Gulf War Illness: A Pilot Study

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14. ABSTRACT The overall objective of the study is to determine the efficacy of a Low FODMAP (modified healthy) diet relative to a High FODMAP (typical healthy) diet in reducing the 1) Intestinal symptoms of Irritable Bowel Syndrome and 2) Non-intestinal symptoms (fatigue, joint pain, insomnia, general stiffness and headache) in Veterans with Gulf War Illness. We will also determine if the change in gut flora is a mechanism for improvement in symptoms of IBS and GW illness while on the study. We have screened 40 and enrolled 28, and 26 Gulf War Veterans have completed the study. Our efforts are ongoing to recruit more Gulf War veterans.					
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Introduction:

New onset of gastroenteritis during deployment is a risk factor for the development of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) after deployment. Gulf War (GW) Veterans with IBS are more likely to report fatigue, joint pains, general stiffness and headaches; symptoms that are indistinguishable from GW Illness. Diet is a major factor that influence gut bacteria along with gastroenteritis, travel, and stress factors which are relevant to GW Veterans. This suggests that foods as well as an alteration in intestinal microbiota are involved in the pathogenesis of IBS in GW Veterans.

The goal of this project is to compare a low FODMAP (modified healthy) diet to a high FODMAP (typical healthy) diet in Veterans with IBS and symptoms of GW illness. Both diets will be healthy.

Body:

During the past year the following goals were accomplished:

- Due to COVID-19 the study activities stopped. Subsequently the VA kitchen could not support our study due to shortage of staff/cooks.
- During the last year, no patient was recruited due to inability to find the cook/kitchen staff to prepare and distribute the meals for the study.
- The University of Utah has opened a new Metabolic Kitchen and they have agreed to prepare and distribute the meals for the study.
- So far, we have screened 40 Gulf War Veterans and have enrolled 30 from the beginning of the study. Ten Veterans were screen failed due to abnormal lab test or abdominal surgery. Of the 28 Veterans enrolled in the study, 26 have completed the study.
- Stool banking has been set up at the VA Medical Center, Salt Lake City where the screened and enrolled participants' samples have been banked.
- We have received the list of Gulf War Veterans in the Salt Lake City are from the Defense Manpower Database and from the National VA Informatics and Computing Infrastructure (VINCI).
- We have hired a project manager and a study coordinator helping us re-start the study.

Key Research Accomplishments.....

- Due to COVID-19 all research activities were halted. We have a senior study coordinator help us re-start the study.
- We enrolled two more patients. However, we discovered that the Nutrition Department at the Salt Lake City VAMC has shortage of staff and are not able to help us prepare and distribute the required diets.
- We have contacted the private vendors who may be able to prepare and distribute low FODMAP and normal healthy diet as per the protocol. However, the private vendors can not control or inform us about the FODMAP contents of their meals.
- The University of Utah Metabolic Kitchen has agreed to prepare and distribute the meals for us.

Reportable Outcomes.....

Nil

Conclusion:

Study was in the holding pattern during the last year due to COVID-19. We have re-started the study and plan to enroll Veterans in this study this year.

References.....

Nil.

Appendices.....

Nil.