

## **Investigating Health Related Quality of Life and Access to Healthcare in Women Veterans**

### **IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS STUDY:**

We are inviting you to join this research study. The purpose of the research is to explore experiences and perceptions of women veterans by determining their level of health related quality of life while also identifying barriers they may encounter accessing healthcare when no longer serving on active duty.

We will give you details about the purposes, procedures, risks and possible benefits related to this study. We will explain other choices you have. We will also give you any other information that you need to make an informed decision about joining this study.

The following information is a more complete description of the study. Please read this description carefully. We want you to ask us any questions that will help you decide whether you want to join this study. If you join the study, we will give you a copy of this form to keep for reference in the future.

The purpose of this pilot study is to evaluate the relationships between health related quality of life (HR-QOL) in women veterans after they have separated from active service between several variables – age, branch of service served in, amount of time since separating from active service, combat deployments, non-combat deployments, physical injury during deployment (combat or non-combat related), and social support. Additionally, barriers to accessing healthcare after leaving active military service will be identified.

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire that will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The questionnaire will measure health-related quality of life using a HR-QOL tool and several additional scales used to assess issues and symptoms known to relate to HR-QOL such as: insomnia, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, physical activity, healthcare satisfaction, mental health stigmas, and personal resilience. We will also ask you to answer questions about your background and military experiences.

Upon completion of the first phase of the study, a subset of participants will be randomly selected and asked to participate in a telephone interview that will inquire into experiences accessing healthcare and any barriers that may have been encountered.

This proposed research is novel in that by identifying HR-QOL issues in female veterans and the variables that may contribute to high or low HR-QOL, student affairs personnel, healthcare providers, veteran's groups, and military leaders will be provided information to develop strategies to improve overall health in this population.

You may wish to participate in this study so that you can assist researchers in understanding levels of HR-QOL in women veterans and how that may differ from women who are still on active duty or women who have not served in the military. This information is important as it assists in future plans and programs to enhance HR-QOL for women after they leave active military service.

You may choose not to participate in this study due to privacy reasons or concerns about remembering uncomfortable situations that you may have experienced as a female service-member.

### **WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS or Concerns?**

San Diego State University  
**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Verified  
Exempt  
14-Jan-2021

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**WE ARE INVITING YOU TO JOIN THIS RESEARCH STUDY.**

We are inviting you because you are a women veteran who has served on active duty in the U.S. military.

Up to 200 participants will be included.

**WHY ARE WE DOING THIS STUDY?**

We are doing this study to find out if women veterans suffer from poor Health Related Quality of Life after leaving active duty. We also would like to know if they have issues or barriers accessing health care services. Answering these questions will assist in the development of strategies to assist women veterans once they are no longer actively affiliated with the military.

**WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT IF I JOIN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?**

Your initial participation in completing the on-line survey will last approximately 15-20 minutes. If you are selected to be in the second group, you will be interviewed by phone for approximately 20-30 minutes.

The research scientist could stop your participation in the research study at any time even if you want to still be in the study. This would happen if:

- They think it is in your best interest to stop being in the study.
- You are not willing or able to do all the things needed in the study.
- The whole study stops.

If you stop being in the study, your information collected before you stopped being in the study will not be included in the study.

### **WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?**

To determine if you can join the study, we will ask you some questions. If your answers indicate you can participate, we will ask you to participate in answering questions on the study questionnaire. If you are not eligible to participate, your information will be destroyed to keep your information private.

The location of the initial study will be on-line over a secure internet site. On this site you will be able to:

1. Read in depth about the study
2. Review a consent form to take part in the study and give your consent to participate.
3. Complete a questionnaire which should take 15-20 minutes
4. Register to receive a \$25.00 gift card.

Should you be part of the group who is randomly selected for the phase two interview of the study, the location will be over the telephone. At the time of the phone interview you will be able to:

1. Ask any questions you may have of the researcher.
2. Review the consent form and give consent for the interview to be recorded.
3. Participate in a 20 to 30-minute conversation.
4. Provide information to receive a \$40.00 gift card.

### **WHAT ARE THE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH?**

Because we ask personal questions about you, you might remember unpleasant things when we ask you questions. You can refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You also can decide that you want to stop participating.

Even though we will keep information collected in surveys/interviews private, there is a possible risk of loss of privacy.

We may discover new information during this research study. This new information may affect whether you want to still be in the study. We will tell you so that you can decide if you still want to be in the research.

### **ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO PARTICIPATION?**

You may not benefit from participating in this study. However, by joining this research study, you are helping to provide information which may help science and society.

### **ARE THERE ANY ALTERNATIVES TO JOINING THIS RESEARCH STUDY?**

The alternative is to not participate in the research study

### **WILL MY INFORMATION BE PRIVATE?**

We will keep your information private. However, there are things that the law does not allow us to keep private. If we think that a child or older person is being harmed, we are required to report any suspected harm to authorities.

Any information that you have provided via your responses on the questionnaires will be transcribed to an electronic database which will not have any personal identifiers about you included. The database will be password protected, encrypted and stored on a password protected computer that is the property of SDSU. Information collected will only be accessible to research staff listed on the first page of this consent form. Research data will be destroyed three years after the end of this study.

Individual participant information that is collected in this study will not be used in future research studies or shared with other researchers.

**DO I HAVE TO JOIN THIS STUDY?**

No, you do not have to join this research study. Even if you agree to join, you can decide later that you do not want to be in the research. If you choose not to join or later decide that you do not want to be in the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled

**WILL I BE TOLD ABOUT THE RESEARCH RESULTS?**

We will contact you with the results of this study after the study is completed.

**WILL IT COST ME ANYTHING If I Join the Research?**

Participating in this study will not cost you anything.

**WILL I BE PAID IF I JOIN THE RESEARCH?**

You will receive a \$25.00 gift card for participating in this study. Randomly selected participants will have the opportunity to receive an additional \$40.00 gift card if chosen to participate in a follow-on interview.

**WHOM DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?**

If you have questions now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact Dr. Judy Dye at: [jldye@sdsu.edu](mailto:jldye@sdsu.edu); or Dr. Emily Schmied at: [escmied@sdsu.edu](mailto:escmied@sdsu.edu) - If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, or in the event of a research related injury, you may contact the Division of Research Affairs at San Diego State University (telephone: 619-594-6622; email: [irb@sdsu.edu](mailto:irb@sdsu.edu)). At any time during the research, you can contact the IRB for questions about research rights, to discuss problems, concerns, give suggestions, or to offer input.

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE:**

The San Diego State University Institutional Review Board has approved this consent form, as signified by the Board's stamp.

San Diego State University  
**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Verified  
Exempt  
14-Jan-2021

Your mark below indicates that the study team has explained the study to you and you have read the information in this form. You have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the research. By indicating your consent on this form, you are agreeing to join the study. You have been told that you can change your mind and stop participating in the research at any time. The researcher or a member of his/her research team has provided you with a copy of this consent form. This form includes contact information about who to contact if you have questions.

Please mark one box below to indicate whether you provide your consent to participate.

- Yes, I consent to participate in this study
- No, I do not consent