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Epidemiology of Combat Ocular Injury to Guide Prolonged Field Care

Principal Investigator: STAUDT, AMANDA M

Institution Receiving Award: THE GENEVA FOUNDATION

Program: VRP

Proposal Number: VR190142

Award Number: W81XWH-20-1-0941

Funding Mechanism: Investigator-Initiated Research Award - Funding Level 1

Partnering Awards:

Award Amount: \$294,307.00

View Technical Abstract

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

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The ultimate goal of the proposed study is to lessen the loss of vision of the combating Soldiers from eye injury. Currently, many patients with eye injuries from war are treated within hours. However, in future wars, experts predict delays in medical evacuation, thus leading to delays in treatment. Such delays will compromise our ability to provide care using the current guidelines. Delays in treatment of injured eyes could lead to worsening of vision for patients. At present it is unclear how much time can pass before the expected decline of vision for patients. Logically, identifying the optimal time frame within which patients should be provided treatment to reduce the extent of vision loss will be greatly beneficial to Service members.

This proposed study will provide a two-part solution by discovering new guidelines for eye injury patients when care is delayed. Our recommendations from this proposed study will be based on complex mathematical equations. We will build these equations using data from previously collected patient medical records. We will include patients with an eye injury and patients injured in a combat zone. We will exclude patients with missing data or who died before they could be treated. The first part (Aim 1) of the study will determine the years of life lost to disability for each type of eye injury. The complex calculation of years of life lost to disability accounts for both the number and severity of each injury type. This calculation will provide a representation of the total burden of injury caused by each type of eye injury, which will help identify the most impactful eye injuries in the second part of the project. The second part (Aim 2) of the project is to identify the maximum time to treatment to reduce loss of vision. Using data collected on patients treated in the current timeframe, we will use equations to predict patient vision loss if they would have had delayed time to treatment.

To summarize, determining the years of life lost to disability, will enable prioritizing new avenues of investigation to the eye injuries revealed to cause the most disability. This is important because these are the injuries that have the greatest impact on the lives of Service members with eye injuries. In the second part, identifying the maximum time to treatment to reduce loss of vision will contribute to the development of guidelines for care of eyes injuries when care is delayed. These guidelines will improve care for Service members as current guidelines have not been updated to reflect expected delays in medical evacuation.

Unequivocally, such introduction of novel guidelines for eye care is essential because these newly developed treatments may possibly save sight earlier and even possibly allow the Service members to return to duty even in environments with limited resources.

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