

**Laying the Foundation for Research
By Psychologists in the Veterans Administration (VA):
1946-1980**

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Abstract

This presentation examines the beginnings of VA research. Discussed are influences, models of research, and individuals who, from 1946 to 1980, established policies, procedures, and legacies for the twenty-first century. VA research grew from landmark studies in pilot selection and military intelligence conducted during World War II by physicians and psychologists who, then, later worked in the VA, re-focusing their energies to design, develop, and discover treatment techniques for veterans who had prepared for war.

VA research was established by General Omar Bradley who implemented visions of Paul Magnuson, MD, General Paul Hawley, and Michael DeBakey, MD, to yoke VA hospitals with medical schools and align psychiatrists with psychologists. VA's first leader in mental health, James Grier Miller, MD, PhD, highlighted research, hiring psychologists to provide 30% clinical work, 40% research work, and 40% teaching. This principle was replicated by the Boulder Conference's scientist-practitioner psychologist training model. Training psychologists to deliver services and conduct research gradually gave way to specialization in research, led by Maurice Lorr, VA's first director of psychology research, who prepared the groundwork for today's emphasis on evidence-based practice and randomized clinical trials.

This presentation summarizes contributions from early VA clinical researchers who built a foundation for today's large research enterprise of investigator- initiated and multi-site studies that began with studies of psychopharmacology (e.g., John Overall, C. James Klett), behavior therapy (e.g., Ullman and Krasner), environmental interactions (e.g., Rudolf Moos), neuropsychology (e.g, Harold Goodglass, Gerald Goldstein), program evaluation/outcome measurement (e.g., Robert Ellsworth), automated psychological testing (e.g., Harold Gilberstadt), action research in solving community problems (e.g., Sidney Cleveland), psychosocial rehabilitation (e.g., George Fairweather), a foundation furthered by administrators who insured discoveries from research were transferred into clinical practice (e.g., Harold Hildreth, Cecil Peck, Charles Stenger, Lee Gurel), especially focusing VA psychology research on improving treatment of the traumatized.