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**VA Psychology Research from 1956-1976 Introduced in
VA Central Office Psychology Research Newsletters¹**

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Introduction²

In 1946, the then named Veterans Administration (VA) was reorganized after WWII to improve patient care for the millions of active duty military personnel who would be returning home, becoming veterans, and expecting free health care in the VA that had been promised to them. The reorganization sought to expand and enhance patient care services and treatment programs in the VA that included the recruitment of the first doctoral clinical psychologists in the VA to provide clinical treatment and assessment services to VA patients. The VA also began research efforts to evaluate the best treatment services for veterans using a cooperative study strategy whereby multiple hospitals combined to collect data using a single research protocol to increase sample size and minimize regional data differences. The VA initiated its first cooperative study in 1946 combining patient study subjects from VA, Army, and Navy hospitals

¹ Original title: "Overview of VA Psychology Research as Noted in Psychology Research Newsletters and Archived in the Washington, DC VA Central Office Library" by Rodney R. Baker. This original manuscript is in the VA Psychology archive at the now named Cummings Center for the History of Psychology (CCHP), University of Akron and is located in the VA Psychology Record in Box 731, Folder 1. This revision primarily expands the description of a sampling of printed pages of 43 psychology research newsletters found on microfilm in the VA Central Office Library in Washington, DC in 2010 which was added to the VA Psychology archive at CCHP. This revision further describes volume, number and date of all VA psychology research newsletters (complete newsletters or sampled pages printed from newsletters) as well as their location at CCHP to assist in archive user data retrieval.

² The Introduction is taken from Baker, R. R. & Pickren, W. E. (2007), *Psychology and the Department of Veterans Affairs: A historical analysis of training, research, practice, and advocacy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

to evaluate the chemotherapy treatments of pulmonary tuberculosis (TB), a major health care problem in the country at the time. VA psychologist support in administrative roles and research design was included in that study. The VA prefrontal lobotomy cooperative study was initiated in 1949 with key roles and interests for psychiatry and psychology. Richard Jenkins, VA Central Office (VACO) Chief of Research in Psychiatry, and James Quinter Holsopple, VACO Assistant Chief in the Psychology Section, were concerned with previously published lobotomized patient studies in the literature which mostly relied on case reports to study the procedure and its effects. They asked Maurice Lorr, who had been hired in 1946 as the VACO Assistant Chief of Psychology for Research to promote and evaluate research, to design psychological scales to evaluate the clinical status of patients in the study. That led Lorr and his colleagues to develop the Multidimensional Scale for Rating Psychiatric Patients that was used in the lobotomy cooperative studies. The first decade found VA psychologists actively involved in developing a number of rating scales for the cooperative studies as well as conducting independent research and supervising the dissertation research of psychology trainees in the training program.

Description of VA Psychology Research Newsletters published by VACO

Newsletter for Psychologists in Tuberculosis (1956-1959)

In 1956 the VA cooperative studies in TB by psychologists was initiated by a number of psychologists involved in the first chemotherapy treatment cooperative studies in TB in 1946. The *Newsletter for Psychologists in Tuberculosis* was established to report the findings of the psychology TB studies. The first newsletter was published in 1956, edited by Shalom Vineberg, and first published at the VA hospital in San Fernando, CA and then at the VA Hospital in Oteen, NC. Unfortunately, no issues of that newsletter could be found in the VACO Library. But

ongoing research reports of those psychology TB studies continued to be included in the next set of psychology research newsletters published by the VA.

Newsletter for Cooperative Research in Psychology (1959-1961)

In 1959, the Cooperative Psychology Research Laboratory had been formed at the VA Hospital in Baltimore, MD with Claire M. Vernier as coordinator. With VA psychology research rapidly expanding beyond cooperative research in tuberculosis, the newsletter was renamed and published articles on research problems, specific research reports and findings, and editorial columns to include all cooperative research by psychologists, including continuing coverage of the psychology TB cooperative studies. The newsletter was published quarterly at the VA Hospital in Baltimore, MD with Vernier as Editor. In 1960, the newsletter was continued and published by the Central Research Laboratory for Cooperative Psychological Research at the VA Hospital in Augusta, GA, and H. Elston Hooper took over as editor of the newsletter.

Newsletter for Research in Psychology (1962-1974)

VA psychology research continuing to expand beyond cooperative research, and in 1962 the newsletter was renamed to reflect all research activities for VA psychologists. The newsletter accepted articles reporting original research and demonstration projects as well as reports of national, regional, or special VA meetings. Neil Coppinger took over as editor publishing the quarterly newsletter from the Research Unit on Aging at the VA Center in Kecoughtan, Virginia. In 1970, Coppinger and the Research Unit on Aging moved to Bay Pines, FL and continued operations of the newsletter at that site.

Newsletter for Research in Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences (1974-1976)

The newsletter was once more renamed with the May 1974 issue as it broadened its focus to that of research in mental health and the behavioral sciences in the VA and continued to accept

articles reporting original research or demonstration projects and reports of national, regional, or special VA meetings. Although Coppinger had died early in 1974, his name remained as editor on the masthead with the new name. The February 1975 issue identified C. James Klett and Robert F. Prien as co-editors with the newsletter now being published in the Central Neuropsychiatric Research Laboratory at the VA Hospital in Perry Point, MD. The newsletter was discontinued with the last issue in the VACO Library dated August 1976.

It should be noted that although the above descriptions indicated that all of the newsletters were published at some unit within a VA Hospital or VA Center that the newsletters were identified as VA Information Bulletins and printed by the U.S. Government Printing Office. Information in the newsletters was sometimes taken from the VA's annual reports to Congress or in some cases supplied data for the VA's report to Congress.

Source of Information and Newsletters for the VA Psychology Archive

In an August 2010 visit to VACO in Washington, DC, 43 psychology research newsletters were found on microfilm in the VACO Library that were published in 1959 through 1976. Since the newsletters were to have been published quarterly and the newsletters on microfilm did not always have sequential volume and number dates, it can be assumed there were missing newsletters on microfilm. That assumption was supported by the fact that in December 2003 items were being collected for the newly established VA psychology archive at the then named Center for the History of Psychology, Archives of the History of American Psychology at The University of Akron. Active and retired VA psychology chiefs and others were asked to send available copies of the above described newsletters to the author. Twenty-four (24) original bound newsletters were received dated between 1966 and 1976 that collectively contained

approximately 1000 pages and had been added to the VA Psychology archive in March of 2004. Eleven (11) of those original bound newsletters were not included among the microfilm newsletters in the VACO Library and confirms that it cannot be assumed that all published psychology research newsletters were either on microfilm in the VACO Library or collected in the request for original copies.

Reviewing the page numbers in the Table of Contents for the 43 newsletters found on microfilm in the VACO Library, each issue usually ranged from 40-50 pages or a projected 2,000 pages for the entire set. Making prints of each microfilm page during the August 2010 visit would have been impractical at the time and, since the VACO librarian reported that there were plans to scan and convert all of the microfilms to digital files, only the newsletter Table of Content page(s) for each issue were printed out. Prints of a few selected articles, especially for the first set of newsletters, were additionally made in order to get a sense of the nature of the newsletter articles and range of research topics.

Prints of sample pages from the 43 microfilm newsletters on microfilm (Table of Content and selected articles) were sent to the archive to be added to the VA psychology record in August 2010. The volume/number and date for each issue are listed in Appendix A, and they are currently housed at the VA psychology archive at the now named Cummings Center for the History of Psychology (CCHP) at the University of Akron in the VA Psychology records, box 731, folder 1. The list of the 24 original newsletters that had been sent to the archive in March 2004 appears in Appendix B. These 24 original newsletters are located in several boxes at the CCHP in the VA Psychology records: box 727, folder 2, 3, 4, and 5, and box 728, folder 1, 2, and 3. In October 2020 the microfilm prints of newsletter pages were also scanned into three sets (one set for each of the available named newsletters). The scanned digital copies of these

newsletters are currently available only to the VA Psychology Historian Team but will be offered to CCHP in the future in order to make the newsletters on microfilm available for download on home and office computers. Until then, the newsletter page sampling described above on microfilm in the VACO Library and the original bound newsletters be can be obtained from CCHP by specifying the box and folder locations indicated in the previous paragraph and requesting issues be copied and sent to any archive user at the then current CCHP copying and retrieval costs.

Newsletter Review and Observations

The previously introduced VA patient care reorganization of 1946 following WWII was not only responsible for the establishment of psychology and other clinical treatment services, but mental health leaders in VACO were promoting treatment evaluation research, especially using the cooperative research model. The research focus by VA leaders naturally appealed to doctoral psychologists being recruited in the VA with their research training background. The psychology research newsletters and reports of study findings not only helped inform many VA psychologists about new research findings that could be applied to the veteran patients under their care, but the reports likely encouraged many psychologists to ask follow-up questions about the care they were providing to patients and began developing studies themselves. Many psychologists were also discovering that hospital managers (the position title that was given to hospital directors at the time) were pleased at having their hospital named in an official VA newsletter publication.

Although no issues were found of the *Newsletter for Psychologists in Tuberculosis*, the newsletter was described as including reports and early findings of the cooperative studies in TB

by psychologists. Those early findings were cumulatively reported in “The Psychosocial Study of the Patient with Pulmonary Tuberculosis: A Cooperative Research Approach,” authored by five of the psychologist TB cooperative study researchers, and published by the American Psychological Association (APA) as a *Psychological Monograph* (1961, Vol 75, No. 6). Since the cooperative psychology TB studies were still ongoing and included when the newsletter was expanded and renamed in 1959, a number of the psychologist TB study updates were selected articles to be printed and reported below to illustrate the activities and focus of the TB psychology cooperative studies.

The newsletter prints of the Table of Content pages of the subsequent newsletter versions provide a nice introduction and overview of the development and complexity of psychology research and the range and changes in research topics over the years. The first *Newsletter for Cooperative Research in Psychology* in 1959 showed how the initial research years in TB had influenced and expanded cooperative research. One research report in that first newsletter (not selected for printing) was “A Comparative Investigation of Dependency in Epilepsy, Paraplegia, and Tuberculosis.” The October 1960 newsletter issue featured psychology cooperative studies on “Adjustment to Long-Term Hospitalization” which described four studies presented at an APA convention symposium, one of which focused on the orthopedically disabled (again not selected for printing.)

As noted above, however, several articles from the eight issues of the *Newsletter for Cooperative Research in Psychology* on microfilm were selected for printing along with their Table of Contents pages because they related to ongoing psychology TB studies. The second newsletter dated July 1959 (Vol 1, #2 issue, pp 2-6) contained a 5-page article which described the cooperative research process used by VA psychologists in conducting TB research by H.

Elston Hooper, a member of the Executive Committee of the Cooperative Psychological Research Project. His presentation was part of a panel presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Tuberculosis Association in May of 1959. The panel was titled "Organization and Conduct of Psychological Research in Tuberculosis." Hooper's paper in that issue was included as a printed article for the archives. That same issue contained several updated reports on psychology TB cooperative project studies (#6, 7, and 8) on pages 32-35 under the project update section of the newsletter entitled "The Same Street-Another Window" (those reports were also printed from that microfilm issue). The April 1960 newsletter (Vol II, # 2, pp 13-15) contains a printed paper from the microfilm issue on the psychology cooperative TB research studies presented by Claire M. Vernier, Robert P. Barrell, and H. Elston Hooper at the 19th VA-Armed Forces Conference on the Chemotherapy of Tuberculosis held in Cincinnati on February 9, 1960.

Although not necessarily related to psychology TB or other cooperative research, the last issue of the January 1961 *Newsletter for Cooperative Research in Psychology* before the newsletter dropped cooperative in its title (Vol 3, #1, pp 1-5) was an excellent article by Joel Greenspoon at Florida State University that was printed along with the Table of Contents that outlined the research benefits to university graduate students participating in the VA psychology training program. He noted that the VA gave students access to dissertation and other research opportunities in a service-oriented, hospital-based setting that was not always available to graduate students in other training locations. He added the importance of trainees interacting with and learning more about other health-care disciplines in their research in a VA hospital.

When the newsletters expanded the focus again to include all VA psychology research not just that of psychology cooperative studies the first issue in February 1962 of the renamed

Newsletter for Research in Psychology included a research report on “Disturbance of Gestural Communication in Aphasia” by Harold Goodglass and Edith Kaplan. Also included were articles on “Alerting Patterns in a Stimulus-Brain Response Feedback Loop: An Interim Report” by Thomas Mulholland and Sylvia Runnals and “A Table for Obtaining Expected Scores of MMPI Scales from a Social Desirability Measure” by Hildegund Holloway and Edward Gocka. Future issues continued to showcase the remarkable diversity of VA psychology research: “Attitudes Toward Mental Illness and Related Staff Behavior” by Robert B. Ellsworth; “Rorschach Systems and Brain Syndromes Associated With Metabolic Disorders” by David L. Jordan; “The Psychodynamics of Psychiatric Hospitalization” by Alvin R. Mahrer; “Concept Identification and Psychopathology” by Vladimir Pishkin; “The Nurses’ Observation Scale for Inpatient Evaluation (NOISE): A New Scale for Measuring Improvement in Chronic Schizophrenia” by Gilbert Honigfield and C. James Klett; and “A Scale for Measuring Meaningful Recent and Remote Memory” by J. J. Lasky.

The diversity of research reports in the newsletters continued to grow as psychologists became involved in the entire range of psychology research in the VA. The newsletter issues edited by Neil Coppinger over a 13-year period indeed tracked a significant expansion of psychology research from treatment of Vietnam veterans to domiciliary care of veterans to evaluations of alcoholism treatment program.

With the inclusion of all VA psychology research in the *Newsletter for Research in Psychology*, the February 1966 issue added a newsletter section inviting and listing journal research publications by VA psychologists. Remaining issues would often list from 45 to 70 publications in professional journals. A perusal of the publication listings shows the same

diversity of published research topics as in the newsletters themselves with a wide range of journals publishing the work of VA research psychologists.

One of newsletter issues not found on microfilm in the VACO Library but was included in the collection of original bound newsletters in the VA psychology archive at CCHP (and can be copied and retrieved by CCHP staff for readers for a nominal fee) covered the April 1971 Conference on Psychological Assessment and Programming at the VA Center in Bay Pines, FL (Volume XIII, No. 2, May 1971 newsletter). Research topics included automated neuropsychological assessment, computerized scoring and cross-validation of objective tests, and automated interviews. This conference set the groundwork for the VA's automation of the mental health patient care record and the computer-assisted psychological assessment program using the MMPI and other objective or interview-based psychological assessment instruments which currently completes over 15 million assessments per year for the clinical record. The similarly missing newsletter issue on microfilm in the VACO Library in the bound newsletter collection (Volume XIII, No. 4, November 1971) adds study reports on the problems encountered in the treatment of Vietnam veterans and attention to the needs of elderly veterans.

The final newsletter name change to *Newsletter for Research in Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences* continued the research diversity expansion. The first issue with that name in May of 1974 reported on the "Training for Individual and Group Effectiveness and Resourcefulness (TIGER)" by Philip G. Hanson and Cecil P. Peck in describing the training of over 40,000 VA employees, including front line administrative management personnel and treatment personnel, to be more sensitive and responsive to the needs of veterans as well as treatment personnel and other VA employees. Additional newsletter issues introduced research topics such as treatment and response to smoking behavior among patients and employees, psychiatric care in nursing

home care units, and presentations on recent developments in outcome evaluation of mental health programs. The last issue itself again reflected the diversity of psychological research in the VA with articles on evoked potential asymmetry in a case of lateralized lesion, electromyographic biofeedback training in mild right hemiparesis, delayed psychiatric casualties from the Vietnam conflict, and three articles on research on smoking in the VA.

In summary, it can be noted from the above observations that a significant benefit in using the research newsletters to understand the early history of VA psychology research is in its portrayal of the scope and diversity in the early decades of psychology research activities in the VA starting in 1946. The reporting of initial, interim, and final research findings does not compete with or replace the need for professional journal publications but does serve to bring early research findings and hypotheses forward for examination and conversation and promote additional research.

APPENDIX A

**Listing of 43 VA Psychology Research Newsletters in VA Psychology
Archives Found on Microfilm in VACO Library with Sample of Printed
Pages Including Table of Contents and Selected Articles**

Set #1: Sample printed pages from issues of the *Newsletter for Cooperative Research in Psychology* found in VACO Library, n=8

Vol I, #1, Apr 1959

Vol I, #2, July 1959

Vol I, #3, Oct 1959

Vol II, #1, Jan 1960

Vol II, #2, Apr 1960

Vol II, #3, July 1960

Vol II, #4, Oct 1960

Vol III, #1, Jan 1961

Set #2: Sampled printed pages from issues of the *Newsletter for Research in Psychology*, found in VACO Library, n=27

Vol IV, #1, Feb 1962

Vol VI, #1, Feb 1964

Vol VI, #2, May 1964

Vol VI, #3, June 1964

Vol VII, #2, May 1965

Vol VII, #3, Aug 1965

Vol VIII, #1, Feb 1966

Vol VIII, #2, May 1966

Vol VIII, #3, Aug 1966

Vol VIII, #4, Nov 1966

Vol IX, #1, Feb 1967

Vol IX, #2, May 1967

Vol IX, #3, Aug 1967

Vol IX, #4, Nov 1967

Vol X, #1, Feb 1968

Vol X, #2, May 1968

Vol X, #3, Aug, 1968

Vol X, #4, Nov 1968

Vol XI, #1, Feb 1969

Vol XI, #2, May 1969

Vol XI, #3, Aug 1969

Vol XI, #4, Nov 1969

Vol XII, #1, Feb 1970

Vol XIV, #1, Feb 1972 (Newsletter operations moved to VA Center at Bay Pines, FL)

Vol XIV, #4, Nov 1972

Vol XV, #2, May 1973

Vol XVI, #1, Feb 1974

Set #3: Sampled printed pages from issues of the *Newsletter for Research in Mental Health &*

Behavioral Sciences found in VACO Library, n =8

Vol XVI, #2, May 1974

Vol XVII, #1, Feb 1975

Vol XVII, #2, May 1975

Vol XVII, #3, Aug 1975

Vol XVII, #4, Nov 1975

Vol XVIII, #1, Feb 1976

Vol XVIII, #2, May 1976

Vol XVIII, #3, Aug 1976

APPENDIX B

Listing of 24 Original Bound VA Psychology Research

Newsletters in VA Psychology Archives³

From *Newsletter for Research in Psychology*

- Vol VIII, #1, 1966 (49 pages)
- Vol IX, #1, 1967 (50 pages)
- Vol IX, #3, 1967 (39 pages)
- Vol XI, #3, 1969 (61 pages)
- Vol XI, #4, 1969 (39 pages)
- Vol XII, #1, 1970 (48 pages)
- Vol XII, #2, 1970 (40 pages?--Bound issue not on microfilm in VACO Library)
- Vol XIII, #2, 1971 (40 pages?--Bound issue not on microfilm in VACO Library)
- Vol XIII, #3, 1971 (40 pages?--Bound issue not on microfilm in VACO Library)
- Vol XIII, #4, 1971 (40 pages?--Bound issue not on microfilm in VACO Library)
- Vol XIV, #2, 1972 (40 pages?--Bound issue not on microfilm in VACO Library)
- Vol XIV, #3, 1972 (40 pages?--Bound issue not on microfilm in VACO Library)
- Vol XV, #1, 1973 (40 pages?--Bound issue not on microfilm in VACO Library)
- Vol XV, #2, 1973 (53 pages)
- Vol XV, #3, 1973 (40 pages?--Bound issue not on microfilm in VACO Library)
- Vol XV, #4, 1973 (40 pages?--Bound issue not on microfilm in VACO Library)
- Vol XVI, #1, 1974 (40 pages?--Bound issue not on microfilm in VACO Library)

³ The month of publication was not listed in the VA Psychology archive finding aid at CCHP. The page count comes from microfilm records or is estimated at 40 pages for the 11 bound copies not on microfilm in the VACO Library.

From Newsletter for Research in Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences

Vol XVI, #2, 1974 (46 pages)

Vol XVI, #3, 1974 (40 pages?--Bound issue not on microfilm in VACO Library)

Vol XVII, #2, 1975 (53 pages)

Vol XVII, #3, 1975 (30 pages)

Vol XVII, #4, 1975 (45 pages)

Vol XVIII, #1, 1976 (48 pages)

Vol XVIII, #2, 1976 (45 pages)