The military environment provides unique obstacles to conducting original research that challenge each investigator’s limited time, experience, and knowledge base while competing with other pressing clinical requirements. The research embarked upon is often largely defined by investigator interest, awareness of resources, and personnel cycles rather than consideration of overarching programmatic knowledge gaps pertinent to subspecialties. To address the existing obstacles and to promote meaningful innovation and progress in the fields of audiology, otolaryngology (ENT) and hearing health, the Hearing Center of Excellence (HCE) developed a “Research 101” Clinical Research Resource Compendium (CRRC) and flexible curriculum to encourage and facilitate the conduct of research investigations, specifically among junior or inexperienced investigators, but applicable for all DoD ENT and Audiology providers.

**BACKGROUND**

**DESIGN**

1. **PILOT**: Implement a program of mentorship, regulatory support, grantsmanship, and sponsored project support from 2012-2015 at MAMC; Define research milestones for residents to promote clinic research objectives; Recruit staff to support research through mentoring young residents.

2. **SURVEY**: Deploy online survey (80 questions) to ENT, Audiology, Graduate Medical Education (GME), Clinical Investigations staff, and Service Leadership for: • Research experience, training and activities • Resources and tools • Barriers and incentives • Perceptions, preferences and suggestions for improvements

3. **CRRC**: Launch a DoD-wide accessible, Common Access Card-enabled repository of information through DHA’s online Launchpad platform facilitated by HCE informatics team.

4. **EXPANSION**: Market the site through professional conferences; HCE specialty email list serves; Tri-service Surgeon General specialty consultant dissemination; Human Research Protection Offices awareness; medical treatment facilities (MTFs) research and GME partnerships; DHA briefing and discussion.

**RESULTS**

**PILOT CHANGES RESULTED IN…**

- Increased funding from nothing to $1.6mil** (**represents 30% of institution’s research portfolio)
- Additional barriers to engaging in research (weighted by # respondents & perceived importance):
  - Length of time associated with IRB review and approval
  - Lack of funding and support personnel to conduct research

**SURVEY**

- 44% response rate from all major MTFs across a variety of research roles
- 74% do not have dedicated research time
- 54% of institutions provide research training, yet
  - 68% of those surveyed have not been to a training course in over a year
  - 29% have never been to a research training course
  - 96% would appreciate additional online training
- Lack of Strategic Awareness:
  - 42% are aware of DoD auditory-vestibular research gaps and priorities
  - Only 16% are very aware of current DoD projects/resources/collaborations in auditory-vestibular research (CAVRN research)

**TAKE-HOME POINTS**

- The PILOT program has illustrated proof of concept
- SURVEY results show physicians desire to conduct research but a lack of time, training, and support to follow through with the process.
- Knowledge gaps are being identified and currently being addressed through the development of the CRRC. Next steps include:
  - Scientific evaluation of materials, filling in gaps
  - Continued implementation and utilization tracking
  - Partner with residency research advisors, and MTF Clinical Research Directors for program development and maintenance