The future of Complementary and Integrative Health is here - innovative telehealth solutions for Veterans with chronic pain - online yoga.



Nested within the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC) - a national program dedicated to Veterans' post-deployment health concerns and unique health care needs lays an innovative approach to chronic musculoskeletal pain. Dr. Peter Bayley, Director of Research at WRIISC and Clinical Associate Professor at Stanford University, and his team are exploring the feasibility of using telehealth to address chronic pain. Telehealth is an exciting new modality that can overcome many barriers to health care. A new telehealth system has recently been introduced by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) which allows patients to communicate with their health care providers from their home via a tablet computer.

Between 50-75% of Veterans report experiencing chronic pain, a notoriously treatment-resistant condition, that typically is managed with medications, but often includes the risk of addiction or overdose. In recognition of the scope of this problem, the VA has promoted complementary and integrative health (CIH) for use in conjunction with conventional pain treatments. Yoga is a popular CIH approach and is effective in treating many types of chronic pain. The research is exploring relief from chronic pain in Veterans of all eras using yoga. The study has received supplementary funding to offer teleyoga for chronic pain in people living with Alzheimer's disease (AD). The impact of AD on caregivers is substantial, and the research by the team includes yoga for caregivers of AD patients.

Using video conferencing technology, including the VA's recently launched web-based telehealth system - VA Video Connect (VVC), Dr. Bayley and his team hope to better understand the feasibility of delivering an effective pain management tool to Veterans from the comfort and convenience of their home.

This work is funded by NIH grant # R34 AT010364. Please click here to see more information on this study at ClinicalTrials.gov.