Improving the Health of Veterans

November 6, 2022

Welcome to Issue 24 of Science Says! Our weekly newsletter where you'll learn the latest healthy aging and C15:0 research news that our team of doctors, scientists, and experts are most excited about—without having to go search for it.

Eric and Steph
Co-Founders, Doctors, Nerds

What Dr. Eric Venn-Watson, our co-founder, Navy physician, and 3-war Veteran, is reading.

HEALTHY VETERANS

The Power of Whole Health

While we started a new series focusing on the latest and greatest in longevity research last week, we wanted to dedicate this week to the health of Veterans in honor of Veterans Day this Friday.

About 19 million of us have served in the U.S. military, and numerous studies have focused on how to improve the long-term health and wellness of Veterans. Compared to the general population, Veterans have higher rates of multiple chronic conditions, including type 2 diabetes, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and sleep disorders. A peer-reviewed study was just published in *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, which evaluated outcomes of applying a "Whole Health" model to improve Veteran wellness.

What is a Whole Health model?

Glad you asked! Back in 2018, a team of healthcare providers determined that we needed to shift away from simply treating diseases in Veterans and toward promoting their health and preventing disease. This Whole Health approach, which has been implemented across 18 flagship sites at VA centers across the nation, includes the following three pillars:

1. **The Pathway,** where Veterans become engaged in their own healthcare. This includes health education classes led by Veteran peers.
2. **Wellbeing Programs,** including nutrition classes and whole health coaching.
3. **Clinical Care,** in which both primary and specialty care providers are aligned with the whole health program.

A recent study by Marchand et al. evaluated Veterans with a mental health diagnosis who used the Whole Health service between 2017 and 2020.

So, is the Whole Health model working?

It appears so. Marchand et al. showed that applying the Whole Health approach with Veterans who had a mental health diagnosis helped to decrease their risk of suicidal behaviors and the need for outpatient mental health appointments. This success has led to a call to action for more widespread Whole Health services to help our fellow Veterans.

A pressing need.

While we typically talk about how to promote our long-term *physical* health, we need to take just as much care protecting our long-term *mental* health, too. For our Veterans who have an increased risk of conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and sleep disorders, this need is even more important.

The good news is that there are more and more ways for Veterans to get support and help, including by clicking here - mentalhealth.va.gov - where Veterans can explore mental health resources, find the support they need, and even make a mental health appointment.

Veterans in crisis can also call 988 then Press 1 for a confidential chat.

Partnering to Support the Health of Military Veterans

Given our deep military roots, from our military family founders to the discovery of C15:0's essentiality while caring for Navy dolphins, we are dedicated to helping our Veterans. As part of this effort, fatty15 has combined forces with Grey Team's Operation Phoenix to support the health of post-combat active duty military soldiers and Veterans with PTSD and traumatic brain injuries. Operation Phoenix helps military veterans learn to effectively train their minds and bodies, optimize their nutrition, decelerated their "fight or flight" response, and enable psychological recovery from the effects of war.

Now part of Operation Phoenix, fatty15 has been helping combat Veterans decrease their anxiety, sleep better, and even improve their physical performance.

These benefits are due to fatty15's ability to activate key receptors, including PPAR-alpha, which can help lower anxiety and aid PTSD recovery. Recently, we have also shown that our bodies use C15:0 to make a second molecule that can help decrease pain, improve sleep, and decrease stress.*

As Cary Reinbach, U.S. Army Veteran and Founder of Grey Team shared during a recent podcast with our Veteran co-founder, Dr. Eric Venn-Watson: "With what fatty15 is doing for combat Veterans... imagine what it can do for the world."

Learn more about our partnership with Grey Team and see the full podcast by clicking here.

Next week, we'll return to the anti-aging science that may help all of us, including our Veterans, live healthier, longer.

Have a wonderful week, everyone. And to our Veterans, our deepest gratitude. **Oorah!**

Dive deeper into the science

READ THESE STUDIES

- Outcomes of a Whole Health model of care by Veterans
- Transforming the Veterans Affairs to a Whole Health System
- 2022 Veteran suicide prevention report
- C15:0 as a PPAR-alpha activator
- PPAR-alpha activators for anxiety and PTSD
- C15:0 metabolite relevant to supporting physical and mental health