

# FEATURE



**Elaine Peskind, MD**

**D**r. Elaine Peskind is Co-Director of the Veterans Affairs Northwest Network (VISN-20) Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center; Associate Director of the National Institutes of Health-funded University of Washington (UW) Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center (ADRC); and Director of the ADRC Clinical Core located at VAPSHCS. She is also the Friends of Alzheimer’s Research Professor of Psychiatry at the UW School of Medicine, as well as an SIBCR member for almost twenty years.

For the past thirty years, Dr. Peskind has been investigating cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) biomarkers in neurodegenerative dementing disorders. To this end, she led a six-site National Institute on Aging and National Alzheimer’s Coordinating Center study of CSF biomarkers which demonstrated that pathogenic Alzheimer’s disease-related amyloid deposition begins in persons in late middle age and may be a biological marker for Alzheimer’s disease up to twenty years before individuals show symptoms of the illness. Dr. Peskind also serves as a national resource and consultant on the collection and banking of CSF and other biofluid specimens, particularly for the Alzheimer’s

Disease Cooperative Study (ADCS), the Alzheimer’s Disease Neuroimaging Initiative, the Michael J. Fox Foundation, and multiple clinical trials.

Dr. Peskind has spent the last four years creating a thriving multidisciplinary research and clinical program investigating mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) in Iraq and Afghanistan war Veterans and active-duty service members. She is a member of the Veterans Health Administration Committee on the Health Care of Veterans with TBI. Dr. Peskind is Co-Chair, with Dr. Murray Raskind, of VA Cooperative Study (CSP) No. 563, “Prazosin for Combat Trauma PTSD (PACT),” a national, randomized controlled trial for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) nightmares and sleep disturbance in combat Veterans. The study completed enrollment on August 31, 2012, with 310 participants from thirteen VA sites and is in its final stages of data collection.

Drs. Raskind and Peskind also led an SIBCR-administered study of prazosin for combat trauma PTSD in active-duty soldiers at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. This study was terminated by the study data monitor and institutional review board when the interim analysis revealed a robust benefit of prazosin for combat PTSD nightmares, sleep disturbance, overall function, and total PTSD symptoms; it was the first successfully completed pharmacological treatment trial for any behavioral disorder in active-duty combat soldiers. In October, Drs. Raskind and Peskind and study team members Dr. Eric Petrie, Dr. Chris Gross, study coordinator Hollie Holmes, physician assistants Kim Hart and David Hoff, research nurse Kirsten Rohde, social workers James O’Connell and Denise Pritzl, and research assistant Rob Hanson all received the Department of the Army Commander’s Award for Public Service.

Dr. Peskind has broadened her research inquiry of prazosin to include its use in Alzheimer’s patients who suffer from disruptive agitation; in this effort, she is completing a National Institutes of Health-funded R01, administered by SIBCR, and serves as Co-PI of a forty-site, randomized controlled trial that is sponsored by the ADCS.

## WELCOME!

Renee Agatsuma, Diana David, Tonya Johnson, Samantha Kodama, Michael Paine, Corey Pew, Therese Salameh, Sean Sandin, Kathy Shaffer, Joseph Stalder, Annelise Sullivan and Yu Sun.

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