

FEATURE



Tracy Simpson, PhD

Dr. Tracy Simpson joined the VA Puget Sound Health Care System in 2000. After serving as the Team Leader of the Women’s Trauma Treatment Program in the Mental Health Service Line for 7 years, she took a position in the Center on Substance Abuse, Treatment, and Education (CESATE). This transition has freed her to pursue NIH and VA funding as well as provide research mentorship to psychology interns and postdoctoral fellows. Currently, Dr. Simpson has two R01’s from NIAAA and a grant from DoD, which are administered by SIBCR. One of the R01’s is a double-blind placebo controlled medication trial evaluating prazosin for alcohol dependence. The DoD grant, with Dr. Andrew Saxon as co-PI, is building on this research and will evaluate whether the combination of prazosin and naltrexone works better than either alone or full placebo in addressing different types of alcohol-related craving. Dr. Simpson also has a strong interest in cognitive-behavioral interventions for people with comorbid PTSD and alcohol use disorders. Her R01 with co-PI Dr. Debra Kaysen is evaluating whether these individuals can realize symptom

improvement in both areas when they receive either a cognitive-behavioral PTSD intervention or an addiction intervention. There are preliminary data from other labs suggesting that this is the case, but this large scale Randomized Clinical Trial (RCT) will help answer the question more definitively and will have major implications for the delivery of care for this group of individuals, many of whom are Veterans. Dr. Simpson also has two VA Merit Review grants with Dr. David Kearney that are comparing two different mindfulness interventions with an established intervention for PTSD. Initial seed funding for these larger studies was made possible by SIBCR through its Intramural Funds Program.

One of the themes that runs through Dr. Simpson’s research is her dedication to employing methodological protocols within her RCTs that allow for inquiry beyond the typical “horse race” question of which treatment is best, with a particular focus on identifying mechanisms of behavior change. To this end, she has pioneered a daily data collection system that allows close to real time evaluations of symptom changes associated with medication titration schedules, for example, or introduction of new behavioral coping strategies. This level of analysis is necessary for treatment refinement and represents an exciting way to leverage standard RCT designs to address conceptually and practically compelling questions that will move the field forward.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING

April 14, 2014 at 4 pm - Building 1, Room 240.

EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION

May 21, 2014 at 1 pm - Building 1, Room 240/236b. Come celebrate and meet other SIBCR employees!

UPCOMING RESEARCH SEMINAR

March 10, 2014 guest speaker Fiona Crawford, PhD - President of the Roskamp Institute

REMINDERS

SIBCR FORMS

What version of our SIBCR form are you using? Make sure you have the most current form by visiting: www.sibcr.org/forms.html.