Ethnography of Chronic Pain Experiences of Enlisted Women

Objectives
Discuss the risk factors for chronic pain in military women
Compare and contrast the risk factors for chronic pain in military women and civilian women
Analyze military culture as risk factor for chronic pain

Aim
Describe the chronic pain experiences of enlisted women
Review of Literature

- No studies
- Studied populations representative of male service members
- Enrollment efforts have taken on a regulatory and recruitment tone (NIH, 1994; Sung et al., 2003; Swanson & Ward, 1995).

Significance
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- Chronic nonmalignant pain is prevalent in women (Kerssens, Verhaak, Bartelds, Sorbi, & Bensing, 2002).

- Berkley (1997) found that about half of seventy-eight pain conditions affected women more than men.

- Frayne et al. (2006) found military women with a serious medical condition exhibited a marked increase in bodily pain.

- Chronic pain in military (32%) military culture is a barrier to pain care & receiving pain care jeopardized their career (The American Pain Foundation, 2006).

Theoretical Perspective
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- Synergistically influence pain experience
- Culture is relevant to pain behaviors and pain management
- Military culture negatively affect seeking pain management care

Military Culture
Military Culture

- Culture of military rules and regulations promote a soldier mentality that works in opposition to the success of military women (Burke, 2004).
- Sociocultural dimensions of pain have received the least attention by researchers of chronic pain (Hopkins-Chadwick, 2006).
- Relationships, environmental stressors, insurance, social support, culture, previous health encounters
- Diminish or amplify the chronic pain experience (Derbyshire, 1997, 2008; Frayne et al., 2006).

Military Culture

- Little is known about how military culture influences health and health behaviors
- Women are at risk for pain conditions due to exposure to extreme weather and hazardous conditions uncommon to many civilian women

Military Culture

- One half of all chronic pain conditions affect women disproportionately
- N=213 women, 75% reported chronic pain conditions (2006)
- 32% of men and women reported that military culture was a barrier to pain care (APS, 2006)
Ethnography can allow the voices of enlisted women to be heard (Thomas, 1993).

Barriers to pain care are unknown.

Include beliefs, rituals, symbols, pain management practices of women.

Incongruence in theory and practice.

Pain management requires a series of understandings that motivate behavior.
Sample

- 15-30 enlisted women between the ages of 18 to 59
- Health providers caring for these women
- Observations of clinic, living, & working environments of women

Procedures

- Conduct a 1-2 hour interview.
- Participants will be instructed to complete pain diaries following the interview.
- Mail the pain diaries
- Gift care ($10)

Data Collection

- Demographics
- Field journal
- Qualitative software
- Transcriptions
- Coding and themes
- Ethnography
Strategies

- Pain assessment woven in all clinic settings included in any health encounter
- Educate patients: pain relief measures are within your control
- Biopsychosocial model for chronic pain assessment and treatment
- Medication dispensing, massage, water therapy, social supports, positive distraction, rest, nutrition, exercise, journaling, and stress management

Nature