

APRIL
2025

VA Research Newsletter



FROM THE CHIEF OF RESEARCH



Spring is a season of renewal, and recent political events have renewed the nation's interest in the importance of VA research. Many major news organizations have reported on the role of research in Veterans' healthcare, including discoveries and advancements that ultimately enhance the care of civilians. We will maximize this opportunity to share our best science and continue to earn public support. For guidance on conducting VA research, please visit our [webpage](#).

-David Clark, Associate Chief of Staff for Research Service

FEATURED INVESTIGATOR



Dr. Ashutosh Shukla is a staff physician and clinician-scientist at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center. He serves as the chairperson of the National VA Home Dialysis Committee, and co-chair of the VA Peritoneal Dialysis Choice, Access, and Quality Workgroups. He is also a professor of medicine in the UF Division of Nephrology and the director of the Advanced Chronic Kidney Disease and Home Dialysis Programs. Dr. Shukla received his medical degree from Gujarat University in India and specialized training in internal medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and Gujarat University. He completed his nephrology training at the University of Toronto and Maharashtra University of Health Sciences in India. Dr. Shukla is board-certified in nephrology and internal medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine. He has established clinical models for patient-centered care for those transitioning from chronic kidney disease (CKD) to end stage kidney disease (ESKD), with special emphasis on patients at the most fragile stage of disease. He currently leads several funded research studies involving clinical, translational, and health services research. His research program broadly focuses on the high morbidity and mortality associated with advanced CKD, transition to ESKD, and home dialysis therapies.

FEATURED RESEARCH STAFF



Kelle Roesner is the Budget Analyst for Research Service. Her decades of obsession with numbers, statistics, and economics began in childhood at church Bingo games, and spending time with her grandmother's bookie friends in Philadelphia pubs. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree and multiple associate's degrees in finance-related fields. She has obtained professional certifications from the American Institute of Banking, Florida Institute of Technology, Indian River State College, and Florida Atlantic University, among others. On a day-to-day basis, Kelle is responsible for balancing dozens of fund control points, forecasting future funding needs, preventing overspending of accounts (especially during continuing resolutions of the federal budget), ensuring compliance with federal spending guidelines, maintaining an audit trail for all transactions, and coordinating with scientists and administrators to align spending with priorities. In her spare time, Kelle is a weekend warrior/activist for the rights of people and animals. She is involved with organizations that champion equal employment opportunity and consumer rights, as well as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, World Wildlife Foundation, and Audubon Society. Kelle is always willing to answer a question or help solve a problem!

RESEARCH AWARD WINNERS



Multiple scientists affiliated with the VA Brain Rehabilitation Research Center have received research awards from the UF College of Medicine (COM).

Jiamei Hou, MD, PhD received the award for "Top Basic Science Research Abstract" at the UF Department of Anesthesiology Celebration of Research for her work on *Electroacupuncture Attenuates TBI-Induced Chronic Pain in a Rodent Model*.



Kelena Klippel, PhD Student, received a 1st place award from the UF BRAIN Center for Outstanding Achievement in Brain Injury Research at the UF COM Celebration of Research for her project *Therapeutic Modulation of Neuroinflammation and Cognitive Deficits Following Mild Traumatic Brain Injury: A Multimodal Approach*.



Clayton Swanson, PhD received an award for Outstanding Poster in Clinical Sciences for Early Stage Investigators at the COM Celebration of Research for his work on *Home-delivered Prehabilitation for Mobility Preservation in Older Adults: A Pilot Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation and Motor Imagery Intervention*.

Congratulations to our award winners!

VA RESEARCH SERVICE BY THE NUMBERS

Clinical Studies

114

Human subject and
medical record research



Proportion of Clinical and
Preclinical Research Studies

Preclinical Studies

25

Animal and bench research

Principal Investigators

51

With active projects

Research Staff and Administrative Staff

46

Research Affiliates

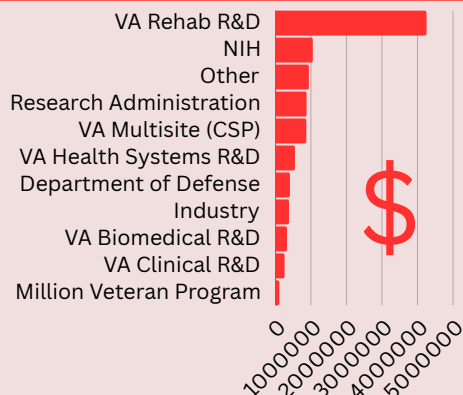
181

Interagency agreements or
non-compensated employees
(UF and NFFRE personnel)

Annual Research Expenditures

**\$10.04
million**

Fiscal Year 2024



Projects funded by US Department of Veterans Affairs

26

FY25, Year to Date

Research Space: Square Feet

30,287

Research Space: # Rooms

160

Research Equipment

1,357

Pieces of equipment