



# VA-DOD Collaborations Workshop August 23, 2019

# Topic: Data Sharing/ Data Access

## Access, Linking and Conducting Analyses with Merged DoD and VA Health System Data

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# Why?



# Trajectories of Resilience and Complex Comorbidity

- Foundational cohort for a series of studies funded by VA, DoD and NIH
  - Funded by VA Health Service Research and Development in 2009
  - Two primary VA institutions involved in data collection and analysis
    - Collaboration with Joint Trauma System
  - No references provided adequate guidance in 2009
  - Primary guidance was talking with, and incorporating DoD investigators in the process

# Subsequent Studies

- Chronic Effects of Neurotrauma Consortium: Epidemiology Study (VA+DoD funding; 2014)
- Military Extremity Trauma Amputation/Limb Salvage 2 (DoD funding; 2016)
- Epilepsy Research Program Studies (DoD funding; 2016, 2018)



# DoD Trauma Registry (DoDTR)

- VA-DoD Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) slow the first time—easier thereafter
  - Multiple revisions by DoD and VA Office of General Counsel
  - Follow up with MOA and ongoing discussions with DoD collaborators.

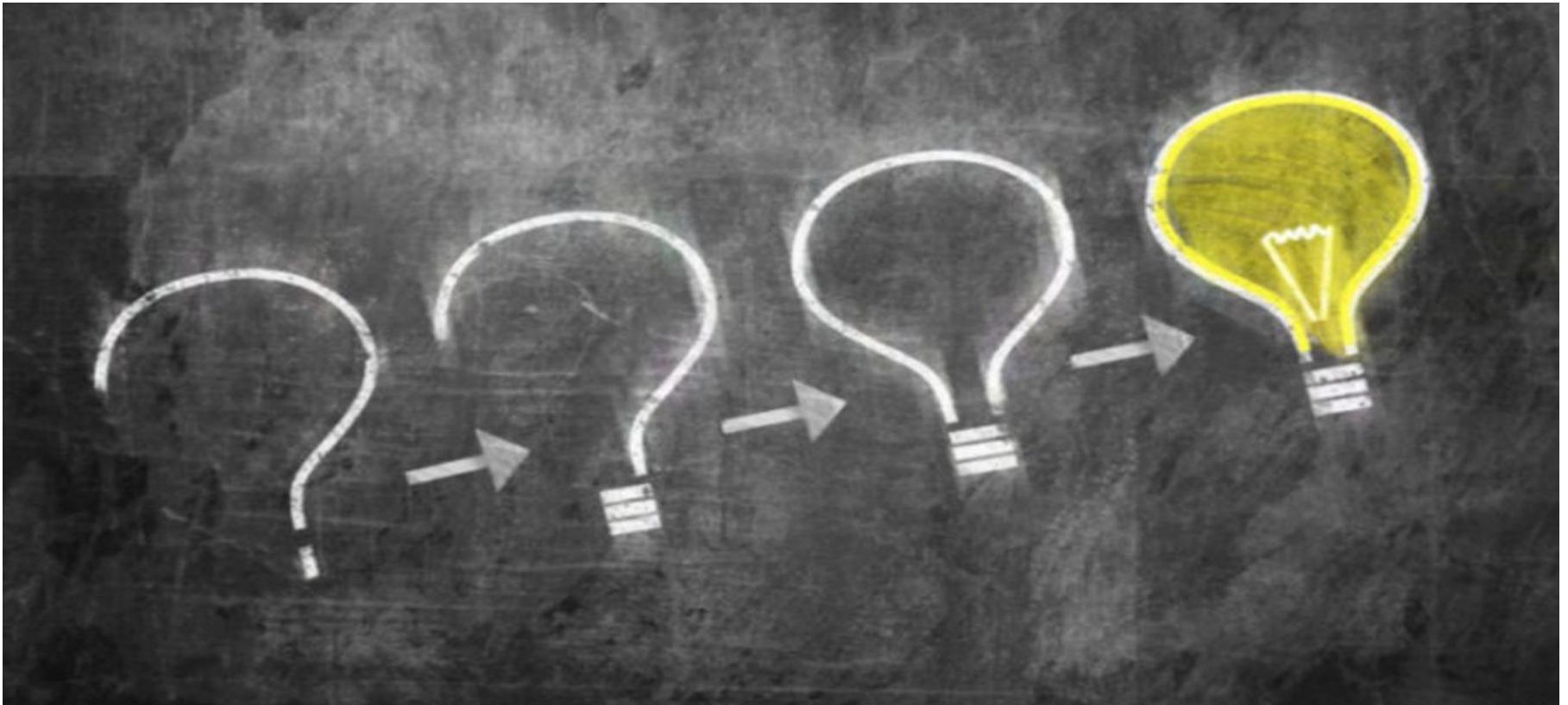


# Transition of DoDTR to Defense Health Agency: August 2018

- Early uncertainty on the part of Joint Trauma System and DHA re: process
  - Early requests were not received
  - Slow progress during the transition
- **Approach**
  - Work proactively with JTS staff to ensure data request tracker/DoDTR data request form complete early on
  - Frequent communication with DHA data team once analyst assigned

# New Hiccups

- Data Sharing Agreement Process when linking with DoD data from DaVINCI





# Resolution

- Early issues resolved via collaboration and communication
  - Incorporate DoD partners in the research
  - Mutual respect
- Current issues not yet resolved, but progressing
  - Start processes as early as possible!!

# Implications for Research Program

- Time is money
  - Need to plan on slow start up even if you start early
  - Issues/Concerns for staffing stability
- Different implications depending on funding mechanism
- Slow start up may require “double time” later

# Implications for Collaboration

- Positive Impact!
- **Collaboration** is the answer...can make or break the study



# Proposed Fixes

- Clear process flow/guidelines developed by incorporating DHA data team, JTS, VA ORD, VINCI/DaVINCI, VA and DoD researchers
- Ability to develop/retain repository of merged DoD-VA health system data for “umbrella” studies