A Pilot Study of Dog Adoption in Veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

The primary goal of this 8-subject pilot study is to determine the feasibility and preliminary efficacy of adopting a dog from an animal shelter in improving the psychological health of veterans with chronic posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), enhancing their health-related quality of life (QOL), and facilitating their reintegration into society. This intervention will be a supplement to usual care. We are proposing this project because of the strong benefits that many veterans with PTSD in our clinic have reported from having a pet dog, as discussed in Preliminary Studies. Our long-term goal is to have dog adoption become a widely available option for enhancing the rehabilitative health care of veterans with chronic PTSD, with the VA helping to defray some of the initial costs of adoption.

Overall Study Principal Investigator: Stephen L. Stern, M.D., Staff Psychiatrist, South Texas Veterans Health Care System, Room M101, Audie L. Murphy Division - Mail Code 116A, 7400 Merton Minter Blvd., San Antonio, TX 78229, stephen.stern@va.gov, (210) 617-5300, ext. 14779.

Research Assistant: Sybil Allison, B.A., University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Department of Psychiatry, Division of Behavioral Medicine, Mail Code 7747, 7550 IH 10 West, Suite 1325, San Antonio, TX 78229, AllisonS@uthscsa.edu (210) 562-6704.