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VIREC UPDATES

1. Free CD of VIREC and JRRD Single Topic Issue on Data Quality

The VA Information Resource Center (VIREC) has collaborated with the *Journal of Rehabilitation Research & Development (JRRD)* to produce *Quality and Utility of Secondary Data for VA Research*, Volume 47, Number 8. This single topic issue focuses on data commonly used in research on Veterans and includes 13 peer-reviewed articles authored by VA investigators.

For a free CD of this issue, stop by the VIREC booth at the 2011 HSR&D Meeting or contact VIREC at virec@va.gov.

For more information regarding this issue visit VIREC's Web site at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesCategory/DataQuality/JRRD.htm>.

2. VIREC Participation at the 2011 VA HSR&D Meeting

VIREC is pleased to be participating in the 2011 HSR&D National Meeting. Presentations on content and access to major VA data sources (session #2019), building successful collaborations (session #2007), applications and future directions for VA/CMS data (session #2010) and a VA/CMS data question-and-answer session are among the sessions in which VIREC is participating. Stop by the VIREC exhibit booth for more information about the sessions, to learn more about resources that VIREC provides and to get answers to your burning questions about VA data.

For more information about the 2011 HSR&D National Meeting, visit the HSR&D Web site at <http://www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/meetings/2011>.

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3. New Research User Guide to the VHA Medical SAS® Datasets

VIREC's new user guide (RUG), *VIREC Research User Guide: VHA Medical SAS® Fiscal Year 2009 Inpatient Datasets* is now available on the VIREC Web site. This RUG is substantially revised from earlier versions and is now published in easily downloadable sections. The companion RUG to the outpatient data is coming soon.

To view or download the RUG, visit VIREC's Web site at

<http://www.virec.research.va.gov/DataSourcesName/Medical-SAS-Datasets/MedSAS-Inpt-RUG/MedSAS-RUG-Inpt.htm>.

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4. HSRData-L Listserv: Recent Topics

The HSRData-L Listserv is a forum for VA researchers and data users to exchange information, ideas, questions, and answers about VA data and informatics. For those who may have missed last month's listserv discussion (available on the VA Intranet Web site), some of the topics include:

- Bed section definitions
- How do you request a data extract from CDW
- VETSNET FILE and C & P Mini File

To view these and other archived discussions, visit the HSRData-L Listserv on the VA Intranet Web site.

VIREC maintains HSRData-L, which is available to researchers and data users with a "va.gov" e-mail address. To subscribe to the listserv, visit the VIREC VA Intranet Web site.

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DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

5. Immunization Data in the CDW

The VA's Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) now holds nationwide immunization data. The data are patient level with one record for each immunization and include both inpatient and outpatient services from 10/1/1999 to date, refreshed nightly. CDW's documentation of the immunization data is available on the Project CDW Metadata VA Intranet Web site. Applications for CDW data must be made through DART, the Data Access Request Tracker system.

Staff can access DART on the VHA National Data Systems Intranet Web site.

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6. Health Economics Resource Center FAQ on DSS NDEs

The Health Economics Resource Center (HERC) has published a new FAQ, *DSS National Data Extracts (NDEs) That May be of Use for Research in FY09*, that describes the 20 Decision Support System (DSS) NDEs and points out those most commonly used by researchers.

To access this information visit HERC's Web site at http://www.herc.research.va.gov/resources/faq_g12.asp.

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7. Health 2.0 Developer Challenge Code-a-thons

Health 2.0, in partnership with AcademyHealth and others, is sponsoring three live Health 2.0 Developer Challenge Code-a-thons in early 2011. Health 2.0's live Code-a-thons occur over the course of one day, bringing together developers, designers and raw data sets to build new applications and tools for improved health care. The first 2.0 Developer Challenge was launched on June 2, 2010, at the Community Health Data Initiative (CHDI) meeting at the IOM, with support from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

For more information and to learn about past challenge winners, visit Health 2.0's Web site at <http://health2challenge.org/code-a-thon/> or contact AcademyHealth at hsmethods@academyhealth.org.

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8. DCG FY2011 QTR1 File is Available at the AITC

The FY2011 QTR1 DCG data file, RMTPRD.MED.DCG.RISK.SMART231.FY11Q1, is available on the mainframe at the Austin Information Technology Center (AITC). Further information on DCG risk scores is available in the July 2010, *VIREC Data Issues Brief* at

<http://www.virec.research.va.gov/References/DataIssuesBrief/2010/DIB-1007er.pdf>.

For more information, contact Sophie.lo@va.gov or Mei-ling.shen@va.gov at VSSC.

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EDUCATION

9. VIREC Clinical Informatics Cyberseminar Series

Use of Interactive Voice Response Technology in Health Care

February 24th, 12pm ET (**Please note change in date since last month's issue.**)

Margaret Ross Kraft, PhD, RN

Dr. Kraft is an assistant Professor at the Loyola University Chicago Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing.

Using AUDIT-C Alcohol Screening Data in VA Research: Interpretation, Strengths, Limitations, & Sources

March 15th, 12 pm ET

Katharine Bradley, MD, MPH

Dr. Bradley is currently the Co-Clinical Coordinator of the Substance Use Disorders (SUD) QUERI and leads the Seattle Alcohol Misuse Work Group of SUD QUERI.

Researchers may visit the VIREC Web site to register for a seminar or to access archived presentations at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/EducationResources/Seminars/Cyberseminars.htm>. E-mail questions to VIREC's Clinical Informatics Cyberseminar Coordinator, Joanne Stevens, at Joanne.Stevens@va.gov.

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10. VIREC Database and Methods Cyberseminar Series

Using Corporate Data Warehouse to Assess Vitals

March 7th, 1pm ET

Polly Noel, MA, PhD, & Laurel Copeland, MPH, PhD

Dr. Noel is Associate Director of the Veterans Evidence-based Research, Dissemination, & Implementation Center (VERDICT) at South Texas Veterans Health Care System in San Antonio, Texas.

Dr. Copeland is a Research Health Scientist for the Veterans Evidence-based Research, Dissemination, & Implementation Center (VERDICT) at South Texas Veterans Health Care System in San Antonio, Texas.

Researchers may visit the VIREC Web site to register for a seminar or to access archived presentations at <http://www.virec.research.va.gov/EducationResources/Seminars/Cyberseminars.htm>. E-mail questions to VIREC's Database and Methods Cyberseminar Coordinator, Melissa Brown, at Melissa.Brown3@va.gov.

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UPCOMING CONFERENCES & SEMINARS

11. 2011 VA HSR&D Meeting

The 28th National Meeting of the VA Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) will be held February 16-18 at the Gaylord National Convention Center in National Harbor, MD. The meeting's theme is "Teaming Up for High Value Care."

Among the data-related posters and presentations at the meeting are *Extraction and Validation of MRSA Data from the Nation's VA Medical Centers (#1043)*, *Dealing with Missing Race Data: An Empirical Investigation of Imputation Methods (#3030)*, *Comparison of Alternative Methods for Identifying DSS Pharmacy Prescription Records (#3087)*, and *VA Race and Ethnicity Data Consistency with Survey Self-Report (#3104)*.

For detailed information regarding this meeting visit HSR&D's Web site at <http://www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/meetings/2011/>.

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

12. AMIA 2011 Annual Symposium: Call for Proposals Open until March 17th

The American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) will hold its Annual Symposium this year in Washington D.C. from October 22-26, 2011. The call for proposals is open until March 17, 2011.

For details regarding proposal submission visit the AMIA Web site at <https://www.amia.org/amia2011/proposals>.

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VIREC TIP OF THE MONTH

13. VA SAS Users Group

The VA SAS Users Group (VASUG) is a newly organized body that currently meets locally in Austin every 3rd Wednesday at 11:00am CST. LiveMeeting is provided for those unable to attend in-person. VASUG is starting at ground level, deciding on a formal mission statement and the formation of workgroups for focus areas.

To join the VASUG mail group or for more information about VASUG contact the chairperson, Marilyn Barak at Marilyn.barark@va.gov.

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Data Issues Brief: a monthly newsletter published by the [VA Information Resource Center \(VIREC\)](#) for the purpose of informing and updating VA researchers on current and pending happenings and changes regarding health data, databases, and medical informatics.

Intended Audience: VA researchers and staff

Subscribe: If this newsletter has been forwarded to you, and you would like to receive it monthly, please send an e-mail to virec@va.gov. To stop receiving Data Issues Briefs, please send an e-mail to virec@va.gov with UNSUBSCRIBE-DIB as the subject line.

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Intranet Versions: Call the VIREC Help Desk at 708-202-2413.

Contact Information: For comments, suggestions, or newsworthy topics that have not been addressed, call 708-202-2413 or send a message to virec@va.gov.

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