



Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series

2026 FEB CCSS: Operational Medicine: Preparing the Force for Mission Readiness

2026 FEB CCSS S01: Operational Medicine Preparing the Force for Mission Readiness: Large Scale Combat Operations, Public Health, Musculoskeletal Injuries and YOU, the Clinician

Resource List

[The Fundamentals of Military Readiness](#) (2020) explains how the Department of Defense (DOD) uses billions in annual Operations and Maintenance (O&M) funding to develop and sustain military preparedness. The report notes that while readiness is officially defined as “the ability of forces to fight and meet mission demands”, its exact meaning is a topic of continuous debate among leaders. It describes readiness generation using a "production line" analogy that involves building, increasing, and sustaining the capabilities of military units, centered on the warfighter. The document also outlines the complex systems used to measure and report readiness levels to both DOD and congressional leaders, highlighting their respective oversight and funding responsibilities.

[Disease and Non- Battle Injury in Deployed Military: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis](#) (2024) examines disease and non-battle injuries (DNBI) among deployed U.S. military personnel, highlighting that DNBI is the primary cause of casualties in recent conflicts. The study synthesized data from 29 articles published after 2010, revealing that non-battle injuries and diseases occur at higher rates than combat injuries. The findings underscore the significant impact of DNBI on military readiness and the need for improved preventive measures. The authors conclude that more rigorous research is necessary to better understand and mitigate the various causes of DNBI, thereby enhancing the health and effectiveness of military forces.

[The Musculoskeletal Imperative: Enhancing Combat Capability through Effective Injury Management](#) (2024) addresses the significant challenge of musculoskeletal injuries (MSKIs) within the U.S. Army. The authors argue that these non-battle injuries pose a critical threat to military readiness and combat power. They propose a new, standardized approach to injury management called Mechanical Diagnosis and Therapy (MDT). This method equips medics and soldiers with the skills to quickly assess and treat common injuries, therefore, reducing the need for evacuation and lengthy recoveries. The authors suggest that the implementation of this framework will create a more resilient and effective force by keeping more soldiers healthy and in the fight.

[New Army Leader Guide Offers Strategies for Reducing Soldier Injuries](#) (2021) discusses the Army Public Health Center's guide, "What Leaders Can Do to Increase Readiness," which provides eight recommendations to reduce soldier injuries. The guide targets the leading causes of medical non-readiness, such as running, which is consistently the top cause of injuries among active-duty soldiers. It emphasizes the role of engaged leadership, especially at the noncommissioned officer level, in recognizing and addressing physical and mental well-being issues before they escalate. The article highlights resources like Army Wellness Centers and behavioral health providers to support soldiers and promote a holistic approach to health, including the Performance Triad of sleep, activity, and nutrition.



Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series

References

- Alcover, K. C., Howard, K., Poltavskiy, E., Derminassian, A. D., Nickel, M. S., Allard, R. J., Dao, B., Stewart, I. J., & Howard, J. T. (2024). Disease and non-battle injury in deployed military: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Military Medicine*, 189(Suppl 3), 21–30.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/milmed/usae033>
- Blake, C., Boyer, C. W., & Hourani, D. R. (2024). *The Musculoskeletal Imperative: Enhancing Combat Capability through Effective Injury Management*. Army University Press. <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/SO-24/SO-24-Musculoskeletal-Imperative/>
- Congressional Research Service. (2020). *The Fundamentals of Military Readiness*. Defense Technical Information Center. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/AD1117085.pdf>
- Holl, D. (2021). *New Army Leader Guide Offers Strategies for Reducing Soldier Injuries*. U.S. Army. https://www.army.mil/article/245200/new_army_leader_guide_offers_strategies_for_reducing_soldier_injuries