Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series

2026 NOV CCSS: Healthcare Innovations: Catalyzing the Future of Patient Care Delivery

2026 NOV CCSS S05: Restoring the Face of the Fight: Interdisciplinary Innovation at the DHA Center of Excellence for Maxillofacial Restoration

Resource List

The Orthodontist's Role in Post-Battlefield Craniomaxillofacial Trauma Reconstruction (2022) reviews how modern conflicts have created scenarios in which deployed members are more likely to acquire craniomaxillofacial (CMF) injuries than ever before. CMF trauma can result in post-trauma dental malocclusion and extensive rehabilitation to regain pre-injury function. This study delves into the findings of a survey sent to military health care professionals who participate in CMF trauma rehabilitation, including orthodontists, oral maxillofacial surgeons, medical specialists, and other dental specialists. The results indicated that orthodontics are underutilized in treating post-warfare or other CMF trauma, barriers to care are related to both system- and patient-limiting factors, and advanced technology tools could help improve outcomes and multidisciplinary interactions.

Plastic Surgery at War: A Scoping Review of Current Conflicts (2021) is a retrospective study related to military plastic surgery. The overarching results indicate that plastic surgeons play a critical role in the management of wounded service members, particularly for complex extremity reconstruction, craniofacial trauma and general expertise in wound management. Lessons learned were extracted from the studies to identify best practices for future considerations. One such recommendation is that future efforts should evaluate mechanisms to maintain these skill sets among military plastic surgeons. The authors also posit that the military health system will need to develop focused clinical practice experiences and continuing medical education (CME) activities to help plastic surgeons maintain expertise in comprehensive reconstructive care.

Military Civilian Partnerships: International Proposals for Bridging the Walker Dip (2020) reviews the challenge with maintaining a ready surgical force. The Walker Dip is a term that describes the cycle of the improvement of care during conflicts for deployed members who are injured in battle, followed by the decline in the skills needed to provide this care that occurs during peacetime. This problem occurs within the US military and allied nations globally. This article discusses the lessons that can be gleaned from allied partners' strategies, including new trauma programs that highlight military and civilian partnerships, to increase readiness for deployment among military surgeons.

Patient-reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) in Head and Neck Reconstruction: A Systematic Review Across Disciplines and Geographical Locations (2025) explores how PROMs has become an integral part of outcome evaluation in reconstructive microsurgery, across surgical specialties and geographic regions. Substantial heterogeneity exists in the use of PROMs in head and neck reconstruction, with variations driven by specialty and region. This lack of standardization hinders meaningful cross-study comparisons and the development of robust quality benchmarks. The study reveals that how we measure success depends heavily on who is performing the surgery and where it is performed. Future efforts should prioritize interdisciplinary collaboration and incorporate donor-site evaluation to comprehensively assess outcomes in oncological head and neck reconstruction.

References

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