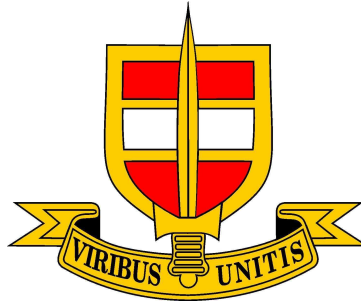




Institut für Human- und Sozialwissenschaften
Institute for Human and Social Sciences
Institute de la Humaines ed Social Sciences
Институт по гуманитарным и социальным наукам



12th International Military Mental Health Conference (12th IMMHC)

**Do cultural differences matter for mental health -
preparing soldiers for and reintegrating them after
international operations**

Vienna, 31 AUG to 04 SEP 2009

Austrian National Defence Academy and
Consortium of IMMHC

Conference scene:
Sala Terrena
National Defence Academy
Stiftgasse 2a, A- 1070 Vienna

<http://12immhc.bmlvs.gv.at>



Temporary Programme

31. 08. 2009 Monday

15.00-19.30	Arrival and early registration	National Defence Academy
19.30-22.00	Informal opening (icebreaker)	National Defence Academy

01. 09. 2009 Tuesday

08.00-09.30	late registration	
09.30-09.45	opening remarks and greetings of the organizing committee and the official guests to the conference participants	
09.45-10.30	official opening Mag. Norbert Darabos (Federal Minister of Defence & Sports) (tbc) General Mag. Edmund Entacher (CHoDS) (tbc) General Mag. Raimund Schittenhelm (Commandant of the National Defence Academy) Official address from the IMMHC committee Prof. Jacques Mylle, PhD (Bel)	
10.30-10.40	official conference photo	
10.40-11.00	coffee break	
11.00-11.30	Mag. Baus Susanne (Austria)	
11.30-12.00	Psychological Conditions Concerning Intercultural Understanding HR Dr. Günther Fleck (Austria)	
12.00-12.30	Social and Cultural Dynamics of Traditional Healing Prof. Dr. med. Dagmar Eigner (Austria)	
12.30-14.00	lunch	

- 14.00-14.30 The Thrilling Clash of Evidence Based Medicine and Traditional Healing
Col Dr. med. Harald Harbich (Austria)
- 14.30-15.00 The Framework of Reasoning in the Realm of the Occult and Esoteric
Prof. Dr. Peter Mulacz (Austria)
- 15.00-15.30 coffee break
- 15.30-16.00 Military and Indigenous Cultures – Wives and Sweethearts?
Emeritus Prof. Sidney Irvine, Personal Appraisal Systems (UK)
- 16.00-16.30 What new brain scan techniques tell us about stress and its relevance for
military stress management
Med. Col. Alexandre E. van Acker (Bel)
- 16.30-17.00 NATO Military Mental Health Expert Panel (MMH)
Grp Cpt. Geoff Reid (UK)
- 17.15-22.00 Military History Museum

02. 09. 2009 Wednesday

- 09.00-09.30 Intercultural Education, which positively influences the Success Criteria of
Peace keeping/Peace enforcement Operations according to NATO AJP 3.4.1
– A research Design
Dr. Hermann Jung, Col., ret. (Austria)
- 09.30-10.00 Mental Health from a Pluricultural Perspective – The Issue of soldiers within
International Operations
Chibueze C. Udeani PhD. Institute for Caritative Science, Catholic-
Theological Private University, Linz (Austria)
- 10.00-10.30 A (P, E)-fit approach to cultural differences in service components
Prof. Jacques Mylle, PhD (Bel)

- 10.30-11.00 coffee break
- 11.00-11.30 Do nation-based differences matter for psychological state? Conscripts' moral and psychological well-being after 8-month of military service
Merle Parmak, MSc, Applied Research Center,
Estonian National Defence College, (Estonia)
- 11.30-12.00 PhD D.P. Lancaster (US)
- 12.00-12.30 Influence of migration background on service motivation of Swiss recruits
Gian Nakkas (CH)
- 12.30-14.00 lunch
- 14.00-14.30 Post-deployment Military Mental Health Care: a Cross Cultural Competence Gained or a Personality Changed?
CDR Dr. Marten Meijer (NL)
- 14.30-15.00 Dr. Schuhfried GmbH
- 15.00-15.30 coffee break
- 15.30-16.00 Hogrefe Austria
- 16.00-16.30 Invitation to the 13. IMMHC (NL)
- 18.30-23.00 conference dinner

03. 09. 2009 Thursday

- 09.00-10.30 CHARLY - preventive preparatory psychosocial emergency care
Heiko Seebode (Ger)
- 10.30-11.00 coffee break
- 11.00-11.30 Easy to say, hard to do. Insights into the preparation of the workshop on
Intercultural Competence for the General Staff Course
Mag. Irene Kucera & Mag. Hans Lampalzer, MA (Austria)
- 11.30-12.30 Tools for Assessment of Brain Dysfunction and Percussive Injury:
Not The Viennese Woman - but The Anaesthetised Male
Emeritus Prof. Sidney Irvine, Personal Appraisal Systems (UK)
- 12.30-14.00 lunch
- 13.00-14.00 IMMHC Steering Committee meeting
- 14.30-19.00 cultural programme (Albertina, Spanisch Riding School)

04. 09. 2009 Friday

- 09.00-16.00 cultural programme (Sigmund Freud Museum, National Library,
Leopold Museum)

Abstracts in alphabetical order

**Alexandre E. Van Acker, Med. Col.
Military Hospital, Brussel (Belgium)**

What new brain scan techniques tell us about stress and its relevance for military stress management

Since new magnetic resonance techniques allowed us to see how the brain handles stress, we learned a lot about what stress does to us.

- Mothers who stress during their pregnancy will give birth to babies whose brain is more sensitive to stress.
- Children who grow up in stressful environments, especially from age 0 to 5 y, will show a higher sensitivity to stress
- Stress is cumulative over the years
- Stress can become a self fulfilling prophecy

What does this mean for the military:

- People join the military with a more or less stress sensitised brain
- The recruits start with their own ways of perceiving and dealing with stress
- Mainly during operations this can lead to awkward situations

Possible measures:

- Start "stress awareness" and "dealing with stress" courses and exercises at boot camp
- Continue this in the Unit.
- Retrain before and during mission.

Military and Indigenous Cultures – Wives and Sweethearts?

The construct of a military culture common across nations varying only in degree, but not in underlying dimensions is more than a hypothesis. It is a recognisable fact in history, biography, fiction and film. Metaphors and models of military motivation can be examined to develop a key to understanding the precise nature of a command structure and to predict its psychological and social consequences. Such an examination yields salient characteristics of the necessary psychological adjustments to be made both by recruits and veteran soldiers. These are neither minor nor temporary. In particular, there are constraints and difficulties associated with becoming a severely stressed soldier during training and active service in a continuous command environment for a prolonged period.

The transfer of a military culture to operate within another indigenous system brings predictable consequences for service personnel. If they are perceived as alien invaders and enemies, even the warring factions within the host society will unite to repel them. Threats to life are real and constant. If they should be regarded as allies and/or liberators, resentment will still be present. Strategies for coping with active threat and passive rejection are essential.

To engage in active service against an unseen enemy of resistance, or even benign policing, requires a minimum of cooperation from the host society. This is never easily gained, but some knowledge about how it might be brought about exists. Training can provide an elementary understanding of the lifestyle and values of ordinary people in the theatre of operations. Illustrations of what might be done are drawn from a Central African context.

Of course, the transfer of the operational culture back to its own indigenous domestic culture *has the same underlying framework as that in the paragraph italicised above*. The difficult readjustment required will not be made with group training and the support of a homogeneous unit dependent on each other for survival. Social desirability does not embrace the confession of nightmares, traumatic memories, domestic maladjustment or marital breakdown among soldiers living at home. Reintegration will depend itself on the availability of a support context that could prove to be in many ways different from any command environment that finds a sick soldier on active service difficult to cope with.

**Sidney H. Irvine, FBPsS, Emeritus Professor of Differential Psychology
University of Plymouth<(Great Britain)**

**Tools for Assessment of Brain Dysfunction and Percussive Injury:
Not The Viennese Woman - but The Anaesthetised Male**

Summary

The presentation briefly illustrates the nature of multiform computer-delivered cognitive tests, describes their use in determining the extent of cognitive deficits, and summarises the results, leaving time for discussion of the potential of components for assessing percussive effects in deployed military personnel.

Background

The British Army Recruit Battery (BARB) has been operational since 1991: and modern variants of item-generative tests for military use have been used in Germany and in Belgium. These tests have been used to select personnel continuously. Although their validity has been established, there has been no published account of their use as a diagnostic tool for describing brain dysfunction. Single participant, repeated measures of cognitive performance using multiple parallel forms of reliable and valid psychometrically referenced tests in situations where cognitive deficit is known to occur are extremely rare. This pioneering study uses multiform cognitive tests to reveal the nature and extent of individual post-operative cognitive decrements as a function of anaesthesia, and compares them with the effects of aging after a 7 year interval.

Method

Following critiques (cf. Irvine and Irvine, 1996; Irvine et al. 1998) of practices in the repeated measurement of cognitive deficit in older people, a single male volunteer aged 65 agreed to complete a battery of tests *for a period of 10 successive days* following minimally invasive endoscopic surgery. Nineteen weeks later the patient repeated the process. Seven years later, the patient agreed to take the tests: once again for 10 successive days.

Results

The results show significant and substantial immediate post-operative effects on perceptual speed, spatial orientation and working memory tests involving calculations, alphabet restructuring and semantic identity. In the seven-year follow up condition there was evidence of cognitive performance decrement over time, but not of the same severity as that produced by general anaesthesia.

Conclusions

In clinical contexts, item-generative multiform tests can be powerful tools in assessing the dimensions and degrees of brain dysfunction; and changes after treatments and intervals. Their great advantages include application on recruitment or on deployment, providing baseline measures, and the removal of memory confounds in measuring change because of its infinite number of parallel forms.

Dr. Hermann Jung, Col, ret. Austrian Army

Intercultural Education, which positively influences the Success Criteria of Peace keeping/Peace enforcement Operations according to NATO AJP 3.4.1 – A research Design

This research design tries to apply the following theories and research results:

- Ting-Toomey's "Cross-Cultural Face-Negotiation
- Engeström's "Activity System merged into the identity negotiation frame"
- Susanne Weber's, "Intercultural Learning as Identity Negotiation"
- Shalom H. Schwartz' "Basic Human Values"

The aim of this presentation is to show how national/international preparation for peace support operations on the various leadership levels can contribute to those values that are most probably positively influencing the norms and values of the Rules of Engagement and in general the Success Criteria according to NATO papers.

According to the Theories of Ting-Toomey, the **mindful negotiation process** in combination with the **Basic Human Value Circle**, (Shalom H. Schwartz) proposes that through the preparatory courses for peace support a change of the value system is to be expected. This is also valid for experiences during deployment. So a well organized feedback system (by means of the After Action Reviews) could give helpful information for the didactic value and the curricular structure of the obligative preparatory training.

Mag. Irene Kucera & Mag. Hans Lampalzer, MA
National Defence Academy (Austria)

Easy to say, hard to do.

Insights into the preparation of the workshop on *Intercultural Competence* for the General Staff Course

Operations preparation in the Austrian Armed Forces includes aspects of intercultural competence. It is not the question whether or not to raise the issue of culture in the operations preparation for soldiers, it is more the question how to do so and where to start. Incontestably, the cultural dimension can have different impacts on the individual. This might significantly affect the work on the ground and finally contribute to success or failure of the operation. Anthropological experience has shown that "even" people trained in "culture" face problems, like stereotyping people, capriciousness, frustration and lack of concentration.

While a minimum of information, such as the history, geography and the ethnic composition of the host country, is important to a full understanding of the mission, it goes without saying that at the same time affective and cognitive skills are key issues to operations preparation. Cognitive skills help soldiers to recognize their own culture-based values, feelings and attitudes. Consequently, this understanding helps them to explore characteristics in another culture, and improves their ability to understand cultural dynamics and address possible feelings of discomfort. Information about another culture and cognitive skills cannot, however, prevent people from experiencing feelings akin to a culture shock.

Affective and cognitive competencies transcend knowledge acquired by means of soldier cards and political information and are, hence, more difficult to impart. Such training is not simply geared to one single skill that might be acquired like typewriting, but should indeed be seen as a long-term process.

The *intercultural competence* workshop was designed with the above in mind. The presentation focuses on the challenges identified in the preparation of lectures on *intercultural competence* for the General Staff Course. Tools are presented for teaching a cognitive and affective understanding of culture.

Commander Marten MEIJER PhD
Associate Professor
Defence Academy Breda (Netherlands)

Post-deployment Military Mental Health Care: a Cross Cultural Competence Gained or a Personality Changed?

A ‘cross-cultural’ or ‘overseas type’ is an individual who is truly open to and interested in other people and their ideas, capable of building relationships of trust among people. He or she is sensitive to the feelings and thoughts of another, expresses respect and positive regard for others, and is nonjudgmental. Finally, he or she tends to be self-confident, is able to take initiative, is calm in situations of frustration or ambiguity and is not rigid. The individual also is a technically or professionally competent person. Not all military personnel are overseas types by nature, so professional armed forces have to train their military personnel in cross cultural competences before deployment. From some studies in the Royal Netherlands Army it appears that openness is affected by deployment experiences in the NATO International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Battle group members tend to be less open after deployment. Members of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams appear to be more open after deployment. Openness is also a personality factor, which is measured in the Big Five Personality Inventory, although both scales vary at item level. From a comparison between military cadets and officers who served for approximately seventeen years in the Netherlands Armed Forces and deployed twice it appeared that the officers are far more open than cadets. These results are discussed in the perspectives of personality theory and cross cultural competences. Recommendations are made to integrate attention for changes in competences or personality traits into the post-deployment military mental health care programs.

LtCol Prof. Peter MULACZ
National Defence Academy (Austria)

The Framework of Reasoning in the Realm of the Occult and Esoteric

Understanding the framework of reasoning in the realm of the occult and esoteric is important for soldiers confronted with different world views when being deployed in foreign areas or when encountering occult belief systems in a social sub-layer deep under the surface of our own society. Superstition and belief in the paranormal play a much more important role in human life than generally acknowledged. Clashes of different belief systems may result in frictions which could easily be avoided by mutual understanding based on reliable information.

Gian Nakkas
MilAk, ETH Zürich (Switzerland)

Influence of migration background on service motivation of Swiss recruits

Immigration has affected both Swiss society and its army. As about 7% of young Swiss citizens are naturalized and 11% have bi-national parents, a significant number of recruits today have a migration background. Studies have shown that this segment of the population is often psychologically vulnerable due to lacking socio-economical integration. Military service, however, has always been considered an important contributor to social cohesion in Switzerland. It is thus important to know whether these recruits distinguish themselves from their native comrades regarding service motivation (i.e. willingness to do military service), not least in order for military cadre to adjust to the distinctive requirements of recruits and maintain high standards of military training.

Questionnaire data on motivation, personality, stress and socio-demographics were obtained from 831 Swiss recruits during basic military training in four different branches of service within the frame of a ten-week longitudinal study in 2007.

One-way ANOVA for repeated measures with parental ethnicity, recommendation for cadre training, critical life events, social support, civilian stress and coping styles as independent variables revealed an overall decline of service motivation consistent with the "bathtub curve" reported in literature.

Although no group differences could be observed in the first week, recruits with fathers from the Balkans and Turkey developed lower service motivation than their comrades over the course of time, while recruits with native Swiss fathers exhibited the highest levels. Paternal ethnicity did not interact with any other independent variable. However, recruits who were recommended for cadre training showed a persistently higher motivation than the rest, independent of their ethnic background.

Similar results were found with regard to the ethnic composition of the recruits' parents; those of bi-national parentage were consistently less motivated than their autochthonous Swiss comrades or those of entirely foreign extraction.

Results suggest that while the military cadre succeeds in maintaining the high motivation of the most promising recruits, they are less successful with regular recruits of particular ethnic background. Reasons and possible solutions are discussed.

Heiko Seebode
ESG Elektroniksystem- und Logistik-GmbH (Germany)

CHARLY - PREVENTIVE PREPARATORY PSYCHOSOCIAL EMERGENCY CARE

CHARLY, an innovative multimedia training platform, provides psychosocial support for mission and rescue forces. Used in preparatory training for missions, it provides psychosocial emergency care. It complements existing care and training units and helps to efficiently and sustainably increase the psychosocial resilience of mission forces.

Using CHARLY, soldiers and mission forces experience the connections between traumatic stress and their own stress reactions, they recognise the symptoms and effects of stress and learn how to cope with traumatic stress (self management). The platform helps to accept your own limits and promotes leaders' understanding of work-related trauma.

CHARLY has been developed under commission from the German Armed Forces, the initial version is for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal forces.

Chibueze C. Udeani PhD.
Institute for Caritative Science
Catholic-Theological Private University, Linz (Austria)

Mental Health from a Pluricultural Perspective – The Issue of soldiers within International Operations

Health is just more than functional state of the organs of human body, the neural systems and their interconnected functions. The issue of mental health, like that of health in general, is a cultural issue. This could be seen from the point of view of not only the definitions but also the perceptions of health. Cultural traditions and mind sets play a very vital role when it comes to health. In many cultures health is seen as an issue of harmony between body, soul and mind. Mental health is an area where due to cultural influences the issue of culture becomes very vital. This is both with reference to its perception, understanding and the dealing with it.

Within the context of our 21st Century the randomness of cultural interactions and intersections has increased enormously. This makes the issue of addressing health in general and mental health in particular from a pluricultural perspective very necessary. The issue of soldiers within international operations falls within the sphere of the aforementioned spectrum of cultural interactions. This hence is the reason or justification for addressing the case of mental health within this context from a pluricultural perspective.

Sponsors:

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