



## **Associate Parliamentary Limb Loss Group**

for the Promotion of the Prevention of Limb Loss and of the Provision of Prosthetic, Orthotic, Wheelchair/Special Seating, Medical and other vital Rehabilitation Services to persons of all ages suffering Limb Loss and associated Complex Physical Disabilities in the United Kingdom and Internationally

# **PAINS OF MULTIPLE LIMB LOSS FOR VETERANS**

## **Surgeon calls for additional Pain Management research for Veterans with Multiple Limb Loss**

The incidence of multiple traumatic limb loss is rising among service personnel in battle, also increasing the mortality rate, the rehabilitation time and the difficulty of prosthetic fitting. Additional pain management research is necessary because of the significant numbers of Veteran amputees reporting phantom limb pain, back pain and residual limb pain, as well as better support for PTSD and depression. More prosthetics research to improve prosthetic devices and Veterans' ability to ambulate is also called for.

These are among the conclusions from research lead by Paul J. Dougherty, MD, Associate Professor and the orthopaedic surgery residency program director at University of Michigan.

The survey covered a total of 501 Vietnam amputees, and 541 Iraq/Afghanistan amputees from 2007 to 2008. The survey looked at levels of amputations, other injuries, employment, marriage and children, self-reported health status, self-reported quality of life, comorbidities, current functional capability for upper and lower extremities, and types of prostheses ever used or currently used, he said during his presentation.

The Veterans reported a variety of comorbidities, including back pain, arthritis, phantom limb pain and residual limb pain, migraine headaches, traumatic brain injury, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Double amputee **Sam Gallop CBE**, an Advisor to the All-party Limb Loss Group, comments: ***“Anecdotal evidence would seem to indicate that for all Veterans incurring multiple limb loss in Iraq and Afghanistan, including all such NATO Veterans, the need for research and beneficial outcomes is well founded and is increasing. There would also seem to be good cause for research concerning Veterans with high levels of single limb loss, and associated disabilities.***

***The good news is that the NHS’s National Institute for Health Research has announced funding and called for proposals concerning people needing physical or psychological rehabilitation following trauma in a military or civilian context. It is part of the Department of Health’s ongoing commitment to provide care to service veterans and builds on investment***

***over the last decade in research capacity in the field of acute trauma, repair, reconstruction and long-term rehabilitation.”***

**Source:** *Dougherty PJ. Multiple limb loss due to battle injuries. Paper #643.*

*Presented at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. March 9-13, 2010. New Orleans*

**For more information see NHRI funding visit**

[www.hta.ac.uk/funding/clinicaltrials/index.shtml](http://www.hta.ac.uk/funding/clinicaltrials/index.shtml) or contact Naomi Stockley, Programme Manager (Communications) on Telephone: 02380 595 646 or via email: [ns5@southampton.ac.uk](mailto:ns5@southampton.ac.uk)

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