

## The Two-Way - NPR's News Blog

# Report: Pentagon Center For Brain Injuries, PTSD Is Dysfunctional

Categories: [Military](#), [Health](#), [National News](#)

12:01 am

July 12, 2011

by T. CHRISTIAN MILLER and DANIEL ZWERDLING

[Note: This post was originally published on July 11.]

The military center that's supposed to lead the effort to find the best ways to diagnose and treat traumatic brain injuries and post traumatic stress disorder is so dysfunctional that it's been hard to carry out its mission, the Government Accountability Office concludes [in a new report](#).

The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) was created in 2007 after Congress told the Pentagon to set up a national center to deal with many of the troops coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan who had suffered brain injuries from explosions and were suffering from PTSD. The program was supposed to lead a ground-breaking campaign to figure out the best ways to fight these injuries.

But the GAO investigation shows that the program is in trouble. That echoes NPR News investigations' [joint reporting](#) with [ProPublica](#) during the last year, which shows the military's difficulty in handling the so-called invisible wounds of war.

"[DCoE was] not able to explain to us in any clarity what they're about, what they intend to do in the future, how much it's going to cost and what value will come out of that spending," says Denise Fantone, who helped supervise the GAO investigation.

Officials at the Pentagon said that overall, they agree with the report's findings and they plan to follow GAO's recommendations on how to make the program better.

"Currently, the DCoE is conducting a comprehensive review to prioritize initiatives, including those congressionally mandated, to identify and resolve strategic issues, resource allocation, priorities, and approve execution plans," says Cynthia O. Smith, a Department of Defense spokeswoman. "There is still substantial work to be done. We must ensure we are properly allocating resources and establishing priorities to take care of our service members."

Read more at [ProPublica.org](#).

Tags: [post traumatic stress disorder](#), [Brain injuries](#)