



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the TOUGH Project?

The Trauma Outcomes & Urogenital Health (TOUGH) project is a research project studying the long-term health and wellness of service members/veterans who sustained genitourinary (GU) injuries while deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan.

What is a GU injury?

Genitourinary (GU) injuries are trauma to the genital, urinary, or reproductive organs and structures. In many cases, these injuries were caused by improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which frequently caused limb amputations, traumatic brain injury, burns, sexual problems, infertility, and urinary symptoms.

How common are GU injuries among service members?

Historically, GU injuries during combat have been rare. During the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, rates of GU injury increased, likely due to the more widespread use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Advancements in battlefield medicine have decreased the number of deaths due to injury, also leading to an increased number of survivors of GU injuries. Previous generations of those injured in combat were much less likely to survive these patterns of injury.

Why is this study important?

The study will allow us to understand how to better protect, treat, and support future service members with GU injuries. Specifically, the study seeks to determine (1) how well individuals have recovered, (2) if they are getting the care they need for their injuries, (3) what life is like after a GU injury, and (4) how to improve medical care for these injuries.

Who can participate?

Service members/veterans with GU injuries that occurred during Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom.

Letters describing the survey will be sent to qualifying service members/veterans with



updated contact information on file with the Department of Defense. However, any service member who has sustained these injuries is strongly encouraged to participate in the survey, regardless of receiving a letter.

May I have assistance filling out the survey if necessary?

Yes. A veteran may receive assistance from a caregiver although we ask that the caregiver record the veteran's answers and not independently respond to the survey.

Where do you find the survey?

The survey can be found at <https://toughprogram.uthscsa.edu/>.

How long does the survey take?

The survey will take about one hour.

Who is conducting the research?

The research is conducted by a team from the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, University of California Davis, and Brooke Army Medical Center. Funding for the project was granted by the U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (USAMRAA) Award #W81XWH-16-2-0013.

Will I be able to learn about the survey results and potential action?

Survey participants can expect to be updated about the progress of the research and receive action updates. To stay in touch, follow our website <https://toughprogram.uthscsa.edu/> or contact us by e-mail, toughprogram@uthscsa.edu.

Have more questions?

Email toughprogram@uthscsa.edu.