



Effectiveness of Novel Recruiting Strategies and Barriers to the Recruitment of Veterans from Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups with Serious Mental Illness

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Background

Aims:

- Understand the mental health treatment decision-making experiences of Veterans of color with serious mental illness (SMI).
- Examine the effectiveness of a variety of recruitment methods and their barriers

Key barriers to recruitment of ethnic and racial minority groups:

- Lack of trust in research, professionals, and mental health services
- Language differences
- Stigma
- Competing responsibilities

Methods

Our Total Recruitment Goal: 36 Veterans

We have **four primary recruitment channels** to target a national, diverse sample of Veterans:



Partnerships with VAs across the US

Reach out to clinicians at other VAs with Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Centers that serve Veterans with SMI and have them distribute the flyers



Social Media Recruitment via Twitter

Paid advertising with an approved recruitment flyer; Posting of approved Tweets on VA Center of Excellence Twitter accounts



Advertisement via Craigslist

Advertisements with an approved recruitment flyer



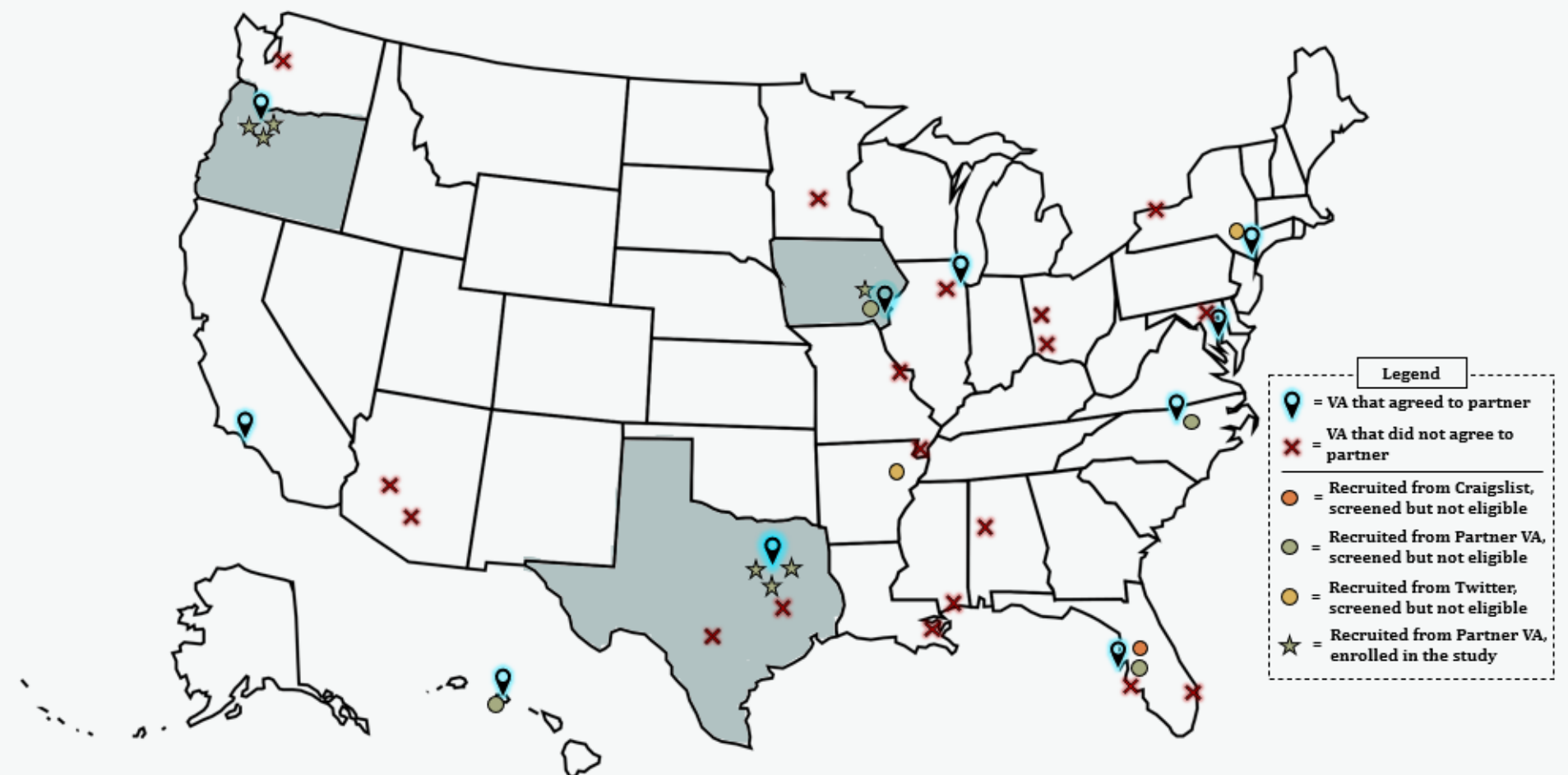
Social Media Recruitment via Facebook*

Paid advertising with an approved recruitment flyer

*At the time of writing, Facebook advertisements had not yet been launched due to an outstanding IRB amendment.

Results

Map of VA Partnerships, Attempted Partnerships, and Screened and Enrolled Participants



Of 15 participants screened, 7 **enrolled**. All study participants came from three states (**Oregon, Texas, and Iowa**), and all these Veterans were recruited from provider referrals from partner VAs. Of 29 VAs we attempted to partner with, 10 responded and agreed to disseminate flyers (34%).

Challenges by Recruitment Channel

VA Partnerships

- No response from VAs
- Unique IRB regulations at each site

Craigslist

- Removal of ads outside the poster's state
- Suspected illegitimacy of participants

Twitter

- Lack of engagement with posts
- Suspected illegitimacy of participants

Demographics of Participants Enrolled in Study

Average Age

56
Years

Age Standard
Deviation

12
Years

Gender Breakdown



1 Woman, 6 Men

Years of Military Service

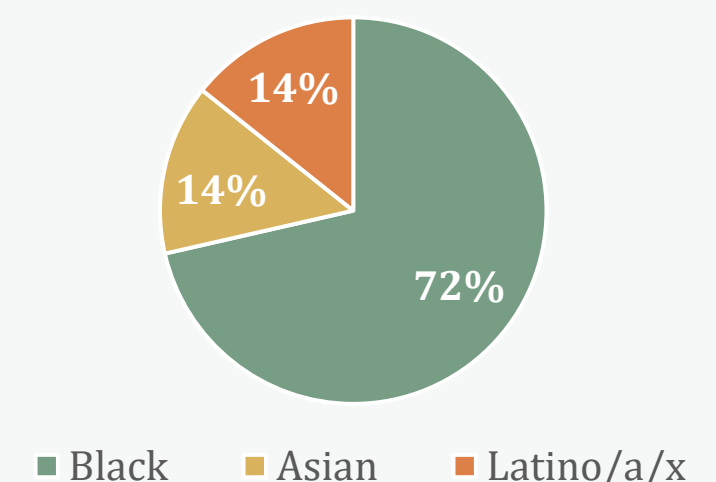
3 Years | 3 Years

Average | Standard Deviation

Military Branches Represented
(Army, Navy, Air Force)



Race/Ethnicity



Conclusion

There are logistical/structural/social barriers to recruiting racial and ethnic minority groups:

- Technological barriers to posting ads
- Limitations on advertisement spending
- Location specific IRB regulations
- Lack of trust in the VA as an institution

Next Steps

- Use and evaluate the effectiveness of methods such as Facebook ads, LinkedIn, and Reddit
- Develop tangible strategies to increase representation of people from racial and ethnic minority groups in mental health research