Background and Methods

- An in-hospital cardiac arrest (IHCA) occurs when a patient’s heart stops beating, either due to electrical or muscular problems.
- We wanted to find out how Veterans recover from a cardiac arrest that happened while in a VA hospital and how it affects their life over time.
- We then surveyed 325 Veterans who had experienced in-hospital cardiac arrest at a VA Hospital. We followed up 3, 6, 9, and 12 months after their IHCA.
- At the end of ResCU we conducted an initial pilot study to determine if our planned ResCU II study structure would work. In that time we conducted 10 semi-structured interviews (SSIs) with Veterans.

Survey and Interview Questions

The primary purpose of the 10 ResCU SSIs was to test out content and structure of the questions to be used in ResCU II.

To determine whether or not Veterans in our population had a disability after their IHCA we asked specific survey questions. Below are some examples.

1. Because of a health or memory problem do you have difficulty with:
   - Dressing, such as putting on shoes and socks?
   - Using the toilet including getting up and down?
   - Making phone calls?
   - Taking medications?

2. Because of a health problem do you have any difficulty with:
   - Stooping, kneeling, or crouching?
   - Lifting or carrying weights over 10 pounds, like a heavy bag of groceries?

ResCU Results

- 2/3 of Veterans in ResCU experienced at least some disability 3 months after their cardiac arrest.
- Between the 6 month and 12 month period, the amount of Veterans reporting a disability decrease from over 50% to under 50%.
- Survival rate before discharge of Veterans with IHCA was 23%-56%.
- Some Veterans had remarkable recovery from IHCA, becoming “super-survivors”—but we do not know how the care of super-survivors differed.

ResCU II (2018-2022)

- We want to find out what unique services, care or experiences our “Super Survivor” patients have after their in-hospital cardiac arrest.
- We are interviewing the same Veterans that were recruited for ResCU, but were not interviewed, using a modified interview guide.
- The ResCU II team will attempt to conduct a total of 44 SSIs with Veterans and their caregivers.

Study Progress

- We currently have completed 13 patient SSIs and 5 caregiver SSIs.
- An example of a question asked during a ResCU II interview is listed below:

Since the hospitalization when you had an IHCA, have there been any periods where you made a lot of progress—where things really got better in your life?

Veteran and Caregiver Stories from ResCU II

Veteran was motivated to build up their strength after IHCA in order to return to hunting with friends and family. Veteran built strength by walking laps around their property.

Caregiver helped with patient recovery by helping the Veteran practice walking with their walker longer distances each day.