

HEALTH ANALYSIS

Driving Policy Through Evidence-Based Analysis: The PARFQ

Background

The Navy requires sailors to uphold defined levels of fitness and stamina. Maintaining physical fitness supports mission readiness and improves both physical and mental health. Twice a year, all sailors complete a physical fitness assessment (PFA) that tests strength and aerobic capacity. Prior to participation in the PFA, sailors undergo health screening to identify those at risk for sudden cardiac illness during exercise. This screening includes the annual Periodic Health Assessment (PHA), a Physical Assessment Risk Factor Questionnaire (PARFQ), and pre-physical activity questions just before participating in the PFA. The current PARFQ is a 13-question survey that covers cardiac and orthopedic risk factors – including a recently added question on whether a sailor is over the age of 50. A “yes” answer to ANY of the 13 questions requires an evaluation and clearance from a medical provider. BUMED tasked the Health Analysis (HA) Department to evaluate the quality and cost impact of the over-50 question. HA’s analysis led to a more comprehensive look at the process, and significant opportunity for improvement and cost avoidance.

Impact

HA demonstrated that the existing PARFQ process triggered 220,000 medical visits per year, which included all sailors who answered “yes” to any of the questions. The demand on the service members, their commands, and the Navy healthcare system included lost duty time for medical visits, the medical provider costs, and costs of any procedures as a result of the visit. The overall cost of the existing process was \$32 Million per year. Based on clinical evidence and data analysis, HA recommended that the Navy replace the existing PARFQ screening process with a stratified risk management process. This new process will reduce time away from the worksite, increase readiness via fewer false-positive evaluations, and reduce process variation. The stratified process accepts no additional risk to sailors and will yield an estimated annual cost-avoidance to the Navy of \$20 Million. Based on the Navy Surgeon General’s endorsement of the recommendation, Naval Operations will revise the physical activity screening process for the CY 2014 cycle.

Sample Previous PARFQ

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RISK FACTOR QUESTIONNAIRE (PARFQ)		
NAVPERS 6110/3 (07-2011)		Supporting Directive OPNAVINST 6110.1
Privacy Statement		
AUTHORITY: 10 U.S.C. 5013, Secretary of the Navy; OPNAVINST 6110.1, Physical Readiness Program.		
PRIMARY PURPOSE: The Physical Activity Risk Factor Questionnaire (PARFQ) is a self-screening tool required of all Navy members prior to participating in the semi-annual Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA). The form assists commands and medical personnel in identifying risk factors or changes in a member's health status since the completion of the annual Physical Health Assessment (PHA).		
ROUTINE USE: Disclosure is permitted under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(3), Privacy Act of 1974, as amended.		
DISCLOSURE: Mandatory. Failure to fully disclose the requested information may inhibit the Navy's ability to properly assess your physical activity risk factors and may subject you to administrative actions.		
NAME:	DATE OF BIRTH:	DATE OF YOUR LAST PHA:
1. Are you 50 years of age or older? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
2. Has anyone in your immediate family had a heart attack, died from a heart condition or died suddenly before age 50 as a result of a medical condition? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
3. Has anyone in your immediate family been diagnosed with Marfan's syndrome (a body structure tissue disorder that affects the skeletal system, cardiovascular system, eyes and skin)? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
4. Has your healthcare provider told you that you have a heart problem or other medical condition (such as sickle cell trait) which limits your activities? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
5. Has a healthcare provider ever counseled you on, or prescribed medication for, an increased lipid, cholesterol, or triglyceride level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
6. Do you feel pain in your chest when you do physical activity? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
7. In the past month, have you had chest pain when you were NOT doing physical activity? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
8. Have you ever become lightheaded or dizzy, passed out, or nearly passed out during or after exercise? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
9. Do you have a bone or joint problem (for example, back, knee, or hip) that could be made worse by a change in your physical activity? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
10. Is your healthcare provider currently prescribing medications (for example, water pills) for a blood pressure or heart condition? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
11. (Females) Are you now, or do you think that you may be pregnant? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
12. Are you a current smoker or have you quit smoking within the past 3 months? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
13. Do you know of any reason why you should not do physical activity? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
14. DATE:	15. MEMBER'S SIGNATURE:	
To Be Completed By Medical		
PARFQ Screening completed on: _____ Member is cleared to participate in the PFA. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
Member incurred a waiver (if yes, attach a copy of the medical waiver)? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
Verified Date of Last PHA: _____		
PRINT NAME OF MDR:	SIGNATURE OF MDR:	DATE: _____

Key Points:

- HA’s expertise led to a more comprehensive look at the process, and a significant opportunity for improvement and cost avoidance. Final recommendations were to replace the existing PARFQ screening process with a stratified risk management process.
- The new process will reduce time away from the worksite, increase readiness via fewer false-positive evaluations, and reduce process variation. HA was able to determine that this process assumes no additional risk and will yield an estimated annual cost-avoidance of \$20 Million.

