Response to 2nd Lt. Noelle Walker’s “Cognitive Therapy for Soldiers Suffering From Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury”

(Military Review, May–June 2018)

In your May-June 2018 edition of Military Review, there was an article by 2nd Lt. Noelle Walker, “Cognitive Therapy for Soldiers Suffering from PTSD and TBI.” While I understand that all articles within Military Review are solely the opinions of each individual contributor, I believe this article is extremely misleading for our military population. The article seems to suggest that the Army should implement “mandatory and preventative” cognitive therapy for all soldiers. The issue with this statement is that therapy is a treatment—indicating that there is a symptom (or symptoms) that we (providers) are treating. We do not conduct any type of therapy in a “preventative” manner. While 2nd Lt. Walker makes valid points regarding suicide and PTSD, she is not a licensed provider (as far as I can ascertain from her credentials). There are certainly preventative measures that we can take as a military to prepare our soldiers for the rigor of war, to include programs to bolster characteristics such as grit or resilience. Therapy is not one of those measures. I am concerned that an uninformed commander or soldier may read this article and attempt to submit themselves or their soldiers for “preventative therapy.” This article also discredits the behavioral health profession as a whole, suggesting that we provide nothing more than what a layman may identify as a “life coach,” someone who does not typically possess provider credentials, a license to practice, or a graduate level degree. I urge you to consider the message that an article like this may send to our soldier population.

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