



Professor Renata Gomes, Chief Scientific Officer at Blind Veterans UK and Visiting Professor at Northumbria University

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Victory over Blindness: Northumbria University to welcome Blind Veterans' Chief Scientific Officer for public lecture

Professor Renata Gomes, Chief Scientific Officer at Blind Veterans UK and newly appointed Visiting Professor at Northumbria University, is to deliver a virtual public lecture on Blind Veterans UK's research - sharing knowledge for the benefit of wider humanity.

Sight loss, at any age, is life-changing: it is both physically and mentally challenging, causes many issues in different stages of life and it often co-

exists with other challenges and disabilities.

[Blind Veterans UK](#) conducts world-leading research around key issues relating to sight loss and wellbeing. This knowledge enables beneficiaries to maintain and improve the quality of veterans' health, wellbeing and their level of social inclusion and satisfaction with life.

The charity also accelerates innovation by stimulating the rapid development of technologies based on evidence and research.

This detailed research of blind veterans' state of health has created a large knowledge base which allows for a personalised and holistic approach to supporting veterans, whilst gathering valuable longitudinal data. Adopting an international approach, their research cohort includes both Blind Veterans UK and the Blinded Veterans of America.

Although focused on blind veterans, the research has relevance and applicability beyond this population, with implications for the wider veterans', disabled and visually impaired communities across the globe.

In this inaugural lecture, Professor Gomes will focus on the translation and acceleration of Blind Veterans UK research for the benefit of humanity.

The event marks the start of Professor Gomes' Visiting Professorship at Northumbria, where she will be working with the University's [Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research](#).

Hub Director [Dr Matt Kiernan](#) is an Associate Professor of Mental Health and Veteran Studies at Northumbria University and a former Lieutenant Commander in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service. He said: "It is a great honour to have Professor Gomes join the University, in particular the Northern Hub as a Visiting Professor. Her international standing and expertise across many domains of veteran research will be of enormous benefit to both the team and the University."

Professor Gomes is a medical and forensic specialist and an expert in regenerative medicine. She has over 14 years' experience of international multidisciplinary research, clinical trials, and innovation.

Her non-executive experience includes conducting peer reviews, providing expert witness testimony, and acting as a government advisor on science, technology and veteran affairs. With active duty in Africa and the Middle East, Professor Gomes is also an experienced humanitarian crisis and rescue operative.

Professor Renata Gomes, Chief Scientific Officer at Blind Veterans UK, said: “I am very honoured and humbled to be recognised as the Professor for Veterans’ Health and Biomedical Research.

“At Northumbria University, no stone is left unturned in attempt to improve the life of disabled veterans. Like ourselves at Blind Veterans UK we share the stronger than ever drive to put research to the benefit of blind veterans with an entrepreneurial mindset, focused on developing accelerated innovation and long-term research to find solutions to prevent, reduce, reverse, cure or live with vision impairment. This is born out of a long history of serving and supporting veterans, while celebrating their courage and preparing for an exciting future where the risk of sight loss in conflict is reduced and those affected can live full and independent lives.

“I am very proud of the recognition of our scientific work which we carry out on behalf of disabled veterans.”

Following an introduction from the University’s Chancellor, Baroness Grey-Thompson, Senator John Boozman, US Senator from Arkansas, will deliver a foreword.

Senator Boozman is the ranking Republican on the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Subcommittee on Commodities, Risk Management and Trade and the Senate Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies. He is also a senior member of the United States Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

Following the lecture, Director of the Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research, Dr Matt Kiernan, will host a Q&A session.

Professor Renata Gomes’ lecture entitled *Victory over Blindness: knowledge for the benefit of disabled veterans and wider humanity* will be held online at 6.00pm on Thursday 24 June. Tickets are free but places are limited. To book

a place, visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/renatagomes

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Notes to editors:

About the Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research

The Northern Hub for Veterans and Military Families Research is a collective of academics, service providers and service users with an interest in improving the health and social wellbeing of veterans and their families across the lifespan.

About Blind Veterans UK

Blind Veterans UK helps vision-impaired ex-Service men and women of every generation rebuild their lives after sight loss. Since 1915, we've provided rehabilitation, training, practical advice and emotional support to tens of thousands of blind veterans.

Find out more at: blindveterans.org.uk and follow us on Facebook at: facebook.com/blindveteransuk and on Twitter at: twitter.com/blindveterans.

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk --- Please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

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