Investigator:	**Ashish Mehta** Phone: (404) 321-6111 ext. 207133 Email: ashish.mehta@va.gov
Primary Research Interest:	Internal Medicine
Description of Research:	My work involves clinical research projects that examine the impact of alcohol abuse to determine whether or not interventions can augment their lung's immune defenses and thereby decrease the risk of lung injury and infection. There is strong evidence from experimental animal models that moderate daily alcohol ingestion for as little as six weeks causes the lung to become prone to infection and injury. My work will translate basic science findings to the clinical setting and will determine whether or not different interventions are effective in humans who regularly consume alcohol. Participants will be evaluated by obtaining samples of fluid from their lungs and evaluating the characteristics of that fluid as well as how well their lung's immune cells in the fluid respond to bacteria.
Relevance to VA:	While alcohol abuse in the United States poses a tremendous burden to society, it is even more prominent among the veteran population, especially among those previously engaged in combat. Studies have shown that veterans are much more likely to chronically use alcohol than the general population. In 2000, the number of veterans admitted to substance abuse treatment exceeded 55,000, and the most commonly abused substance was alcohol, comprising 68 percent of all admissions. Additionally, there is a growing body of evidence that alcohol use disorders are significantly underestimated among hospitalized patients and contribute significantly to morbidity and mortality. It is likely that thisfinding is even more pronounced among hospitalized veterans, who are at much higher risk for alcohol abuse. Therefore, the veteran population stands to benefit even more than the general population from any interventions that may offset the detrimental effects from chronic alcohol ingestion.