Art: Trauma to Therapy for Aging Female Prisoners

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This article reports on older incarcerated women’s perceptions and opinions about the importance of trauma in their life through creative art workshops. It reports on specific themes that emerged from 6 art expression workshops of 20 ethnically diverse women 50 years of age and older. Participants identified 5 themes regarding the advantages of art therapy in a group setting: potential to dream, feeling connected, mutual understanding, releasing feelings, and unselfish concern.

Health Literacy and Cultural Competence: A Model for Addressing Diversity and Unequal Access to Trauma-Related Health Care

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Racial disparity in the utilization of trauma-informed care has led to growing national concern about barriers to service provision. Little attention has been given to association between health literacy and trauma-related health care. To show the impact of diversity attributes on health care literacy, we provide statistical data analysis on a nationally representative sample of 15,309 respondents. The study reveals significant differences between ethnic/racial minorities as well as between men and women, and between different social, economic, and educational conditions.

The Child PTSD Symptom Scale. An Investigation of Its Psychometric Properties

Regan W. Stewart, Chad Ebesutani, Christopher F. Drescher, John Young

Journal of Interpersonal Violence
The current study addresses the need for accurate measurement of PTSD symptoms in youth by investigating the psychometric properties of the Child PTSD Symptom Scale (CPSS). The factor structure, reliability, and concurrent and discriminant validity of the CPSS were investigated in a sample of 6th- to 12th-grade adolescents. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis supported a single-factor structure, which was contrary to the hypothesized three-factor structure. Scores comprising this one-factor structure were also associated with high reliability, and tests of concurrent and discriminant validity were also strong. The implications of these findings are discussed, with particular emphasis on future directions for research on self-report measures for adolescent PTSD symptoms.

Training Mental Health Professionals in Child Sexual Abuse: Curricular Guidelines

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Journal of Child Sexual Abuse

Mental health professionals need training to detect, assess, and treat victims of child sexual abuse and should possess a clear understanding of the process of victimization. However, many mental health professionals who work with children and families have not been exposed to any training in child sexual abuse during their formal education. This article will examine the need for such training, suggest critical components of child sexual abuse training, and describe various methods of training (e.g., in person, Web-based, and community resources).

Predictors of Depression Diagnoses and Symptoms in Veterans: Results from a National Survey

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Military Behavioral Health

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To explore diagnosed depression and symptoms that indicate the presence of undiagnosed depression in veteran respondents, researchers analyzed data from the 2012 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey. Independent variables were analyzed to explore associations between depressive conditions and key demographic and behavioral predictors. Results indicated increased likelihood of having a diagnosed condition in veterans of Gulf War I, women, veterans without a domestic partnership, physically inactive veterans, and smokers. Results indicated increased likelihood of undiagnosed depressive conditions in recent Iraq/Afghanistan veterans, women, Hispanic veterans, binge drinkers, and smokers. This inquiry was intended to offer insights that may guide the planning and implementation of targeted resilience programming for the veteran community.

Epigenetic and genetic variation at SKA2 predict suicidal behavior and post-traumatic stress disorder


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Previous work out of our laboratory identified SKA2 DNA methylation associations with suicidal behavior in the blood and brain of multiple cohorts. Interaction of SKA2 with stress predicted suicidal behavior with ~80% accuracy. SKA2 is hypothesized to reduce the ability to suppress cortisol following stress, which is of potentially high relevance in traumatized populations. Our objective was to investigate the interaction of SKA2 and trauma exposure on hypothalamic pituitary adrenal (HPA) axis function, suicide attempt and PTSD. SKA2 DNA methylation at Illumina HM450 probe cg13989295 was assessed for association with suicidal behavior and PTSD metrics in the context of Child Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) scores in blood and saliva samples from the Grady Trauma Project (GTP) cohort. Dexamethasone suppression test (DST) data were evaluated for a subset of GTP subjects. SKA2 methylation interacted with CTQ scores to predict lifetime suicide attempt in saliva and blood with areas under the receiver operator characteristic curve (AUCs) of 0.76 and 0.73 and to mediate the suppression of cortisol following DST. Cumulatively, the data suggest that epigenetic variation at SKA2 mediates vulnerability to suicidal behaviors and PTSD through dysregulation of the HPA axis in response to stress.
Predicting Treatment Outcome in PTSD: A Longitudinal Functional MRI Study on Trauma-Unrelated Emotional Processing

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Neuropsychopharmacology
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While neurobiological research has advanced our understanding of PTSD, little is known about the neurobiology underlying persistence of PTSD. Two functional MRI scans were collected from war veterans with and without PTSD over a 6–8 month interval, during which PTSD patients received trauma-focused therapy. All participants performed a trauma-unrelated emotional processing task in the scanner. Based on post-treatment symptom severity a distinction was made between remitted and persistent patients. Behavioral and imaging measures of trauma-unrelated emotional processing were compared between the three groups with repeated measures (pre- and post-treatment) analyses. Second, logistic regression was used to predict persistence of symptoms. Our results highlight a pattern of brain activation that may predict poor response to PTSD treatment. These findings can contribute to the development of alternative or additional therapies. Further research is needed to elucidate the heterogeneity within PTSD and describe how differences in neural function are related to treatment outcome. Such approaches are critical for defining parameters to customize PTSD treatment and improve treatment response rates.

Intranetwork and internetwork functional connectivity alterations in post-traumatic stress disorder

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Journal of Affective Disorders
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This study explored the resting-state intranetwork and internetwork functional connectivity differences between PTSD patients and matched healthy controls (HCs). The findings suggested that the PTSD patients exhibited abnormal functional connectivity at the brain network level. Notably, the enhanced internetwork connectivity between SN and pDMN in the PTSD patients may be associated with hyperarousal and heightened anxiety in PTSD.
Influence of memory theme and posttraumatic stress disorder on memory specificity in British and Iranian trauma survivors

Laura Jobson, Sepideh Cheraghi

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This study investigated the influence of culture, memory theme and PTSD on autobiographical memory specificity in Iranian and British trauma survivors. Participants completed the Autobiographical Memory Test and PTSD Diagnostic Scale. The results indicated that the British group provided significantly more personal-themed memories than the Iranian group, while the Iranian group provided significantly more social-themed memories than the British group. The British group also provided a significantly greater proportion of specific personal-themed and social-themed memories than the Iranian group. Overall, in both cultural groups memory specificity was found to be significantly correlated with PTSD symptoms. These findings provide further evidence that regardless of memory theme, specificity of autobiographical memories function to differentiate the self from others and reaffirm the independent self. They also further highlight that pan-culturally an overgeneral retrieval style may be employed by those with PTSD symptoms.

Preventive effects of ginsenoside Rg1 on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)-like behavior in male C57/B6 mice

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We investigated the preventive effects of Rg1 on a model of mouse PTSD induced by electric shock combined with situation reminder and explored the underlying mechanism. In the experiment, before the PTSD animal model was developed, Rg1 was orally administered for one week. After the animal model was established, PTSD-like behavior was observed using elevated plus maze, black and light box, and open field tests. One hour after the behavior test, all mice were sacrificed, and then serum corticosterone (CORT) and hypothalamus corticotrophin-releasing hormone (CRH) assays were performed. Results showed that Rg1 treatments relieved PTSD-like behavior by altering elevated serum corticosterone and
hypothalamus CRH levels. By contrast, fluoxetine treatment reversed the behavior changes and had no effect on increased CORT and CRH levels. These findings confirmed the preventive effect of Rg1 in PTSD model. Decreasing CORT and CRH levels may be one of the underlying mechanisms.

The Structure of DSM-5 Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms in War Veterans

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The present research examined the underlying factor structure of PTSD as conceptualized in the recently published DSM-5. Participants were trauma-exposed Iraq/Afghanistan war veterans. A self-report measure of PTSD symptoms was administered to all participants and confirmatory factor analysis was used to compare several different models of PTSD. Confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the best-fitting model was a six-factor model in which symptoms loaded onto the factors of intrusion, avoidance, negative affect, anhedonia, dysphoric arousal, and anxious arousal. These findings have important implications for ongoing conceptualization of PTSD and suggest that additional modifications to the diagnostic criteria for PTSD may still be warranted to more accurately reflect the underlying structure of PTSD symptoms.

The Relationship between Adult Attachment Style and Post-traumatic Stress Symptoms: A Meta-Analysis

Sarah Woodhouse, Susan Ayers, Andy P. Field

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This meta-analysis aims to synthesise this evidence and investigate the relationship between adult attachment styles and PTSD symptoms. A random-effects model was used to analyse studies across a wide range of traumas. Results revealed a medium association between secure attachment and lower PTSD symptoms, and a medium association, in the opposite direction, between insecure attachment and higher PTSD symptoms. Attachment categories comprised of high levels of
anxiety most strongly related to PTSD symptoms, with fearful attachment displaying the largest association. Dismissing attachment was not significantly associated with PTSD symptoms. The relationship between insecure attachment and PTSD was moderated by type of PTSD measure (interview or questionnaire) and specific attachment category (e.g. secure, fearful). Results have theoretical and clinical significance.

**Psychotherapy for Military-Related PTSD. A Review of Randomized Clinical Trials**

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The objective of this study was to examine the effectiveness of psychotherapies for PTSD in military and veteran populations. Two trauma-focused therapies, cognitive processing therapy (CPT) and prolonged exposure, have been the most frequently studied psychotherapies for military-related PTSD. Focusing on intent-to-treat outcomes, within-group posttreatment effect sizes for CPT and prolonged exposure were large. CPT and prolonged exposure also outperformed waitlist and treatment-as-usual control conditions. Forty-nine percent to 70% of participants receiving CPT and prolonged exposure attained clinically meaningful symptom improvement. However, mean posttreatment scores for CPT and prolonged exposure remained at or above clinical criteria for PTSD, and approximately two-thirds of patients receiving CPT or prolonged exposure retained their PTSD diagnosis after treatment. CPT and prolonged exposure were marginally superior compared with non–trauma-focused psychotherapy comparison conditions. In military and veteran populations, trials of the first-line trauma-focused interventions CPT and prolonged exposure have shown clinically meaningful improvements for many patients with PTSD. However, nonresponse rates have been high, many patients continue to have symptoms, and trauma-focused interventions show marginally superior results compared with active control conditions. There is a need for improvement in existing PTSD treatments and for development and testing of novel evidence-based treatments, both trauma-focused and non–trauma-focused.

**Predictors of outcome of an Internet-based cognitive-behavioural therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder in older adults**

Maria Böttche, Philipp Kuwert, Robert H. Pietrzak, Christine Knaevelsrud

_Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice_
The aim of this study was to evaluate the role of resource-oriented variables such as self-efficacy, locus of control (LOC) and post-traumatic growth (PTG) in predicting treatment response in older adults with post-traumatic stress. Older adults with subsyndromal or greater severity of war-associated PTSD symptoms completed a randomized controlled Internet-based cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) with immediate and delayed treatment groups. Assessments of PTSD severity and resource-oriented variables of self-efficacy, LOC and PTG were conducted at baseline, post-treatment and at a 6-month follow-up. Results revealed that pre-treatment scores on measures of internal LOC and PTG predicted PTSD symptom severity at post-treatment, even after controlling for initial PTSD. At a 6-month follow-up, internal LOC continued to predict PTSD symptom severity. In addition, repeated-measures analyses of variance revealed that, relative to older adults with low internal LOC and PTG, older adults with high internal LOC and PTG, respectively, did not differ with respect to initial PTSD severity, but they showed a more pronounced response to treatment. These findings suggest that greater locus of control and post-traumatic growth is associated with greater improvement in PTSD symptoms following Internet-based CBT. Assessment of these constructs may be useful in identifying trauma survivors who are most likely to respond to CBT.

Gray matter alterations in post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive–compulsive disorder, and social anxiety disorder

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Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience

The aim of the present study is to obtain evidence for neuroanatomical difference for PTSD, obsessive–compulsive disorder (OCD), and social anxiety disorder (SAD). We applied voxel-based morphometry (VBM) with Diffeomorphic Anatomical Registration Through Exponentiated Lie to compare gray matter volume (GMV) in magnetic resonance images obtained for patients with PTSD, patients with OCD, patients with SAD, and healthy controls. GMV across all four groups differed in left hypothalamus and left inferior parietal lobule and post hoc analyses revealed that this difference is primarily due to reduced GMV in the PTSD group relative to the other groups. Further analysis revealed that the PTSD group also showed reduced GMV in frontal lobe, temporal lobe, and cerebellum compared to the OCD group, and reduced GMV in frontal lobes...
bilaterally compared to SAD group. A significant negative correlation with anxiety symptoms is observed for GMV in left hypothalamus in three disorder groups. We have thus found evidence for brain structure differences that in future could provide biomarkers to potentially support classification of these disorders using MRI.