



PART 2

Introduction To PTSD



PTSD, or post-traumatic stress disorder, is a serious mental health disorder that occurs in some people who witness or experience a traumatic or terrifying event, or a series of repeated events.¹

Underdiagnosis And Undertreatment Of PTSD

Early diagnosis and intervention are important for effective treatment and to minimize the long-term outcomes associated with PTSD.²

Underdiagnosis and undertreatment of PTSD can lead to³⁻⁸:

- Poor quality of life
- Increased isolation
- Breakdown of family and social relationships
- Suicide attempts
- Disruptions to daily life
- Risk of isolation and distress



PTSD Can Affect Many Aspects Of Daily Life



Medical Costs^{9,10}

- Individuals with PTSD spend about \$2500 to \$4000 more per year on health care than individuals without PTSD



Social Functioning¹²

- PTSD may be associated with impairment in friendships, avoiding crowds, discomfort being in public, leaving social events early, and feelings of detachment from others



Mental Health¹¹

- Many individuals living with PTSD suffer from additional mental illnesses, including anxiety and substance abuse disorders



Legal Issues¹⁴

- Individuals with PTSD have higher rates of being arrested and going to jail



Employment^{12,13}

- Individuals with PTSD may demonstrate poor performance at work, increased absenteeism, and decreased productivity



Health

- About 80% of individuals with PTSD experience problems with sleeping¹⁵
- Individuals living with PTSD have an increased risk of heart disease¹⁶

Stigma And PTSD

Individuals living with PTSD may feel shame or embarrassment or have negative thoughts about themselves (“self-stigma”).^{17,18} PTSD is often stigmatized by the stereotypical portrayal as a disorder of military veterans and associated with violence.¹⁹

Individuals living with PTSD may^{20,21}:

- Avoid treatment due to perceived shame
- Fear being negatively judged or discriminated against
- Believe they would be seen as weak for seeking treatment
- Believe that they should be able to cope with the problem alone

Some individuals living with PTSD may be unwilling or too embarrassed to seek treatment or report certain types of trauma. As a result, they may experience unnecessary delays in diagnosis and treatment.^{17,20}

Underdiagnosis of PTSD

- Less than half of individuals who meet criteria for PTSD receive the correct diagnosis^{22-24*}
- Individuals with PTSD are 80% more likely than those without PTSD to have symptoms that meet diagnostic criteria for at least 1 other mental disorder (eg, depressive, bipolar, anxiety, or substance use disorders.)²⁵



Final Note

PTSD is a mental disorder that can affect many aspects of normal daily life and quality of life. Early diagnosis and treatment with psychotherapy and/or drug therapy can support healing and recovery.^{2,9-16,26}

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*Based on a secondary data analysis of 509 adult patients with PTSD interviewed in 2003-2004 for which the prior 12 months of electronic medical records were assessed for mental health diagnoses and treatments, as well as an analysis of medical records from 1980 to 2016 of 6,412 patients in secondary care health settings with a mental illness diagnosis who were screened for PTSD.^{23,24}

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