

Understanding acute, chronic posttraumatic stress symptoms

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Little is understood about how posttraumatic stress symptoms develop over time into the syndrome of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

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A new article published online by *JAMA Psychiatry* by Richard A. Bryant, Ph.D., of the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, and coauthors conducted a network analysis to examine how PTSD symptoms are associated in the immediate and chronic phases. For example, one symptom may contribute to another and lead to another, such as how nightmares can contribute to insomnia, which can contribute to fatigue and that can lead to a lack of concentration and irritability.

Study participants had survived vehicle crashes, assaults, traumatic falls, work injuries or other [traumatic injuries](#). Nearly 1,400 participants were assessed during hospital admission and more than 800 were assessed at 12 months following their injury. Nearly 10 percent of those at the 12-month follow-up met the criteria for PTSD, according to the report.

"The network approach to understanding the associations between PTSD symptoms offers new opportunities to understand how initial stress reactions develop into longer-term PTSD problems. The importance of [intrusive memories](#) and associated reactivity were centrally related to other PTSD symptoms in the acute phase, which points to the potential for early intervention strategies that target trauma memories as a focus for secondary prevention," the article concludes.

For more details and to read the full study, please visit the For The Media website.

More information: *JAMA Psychiatry*. Published online December 14, 2016. [DOI: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2016.3470](#)

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