

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Review 21

Sherr, L., Nagra, N., Kulubya, G., Catalan, J., Clucas, C., & Harding, R. (2011). HIV infection associated with post-traumatic stress disorder and post-traumatic growth: A systematic review. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 16(5), 612–629. PubMed abstract available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21793667>.

Objectives	Examine posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and posttraumatic growth (PTG) in people with HIV to monitor prevalence, measurement, and efficacy of interventions to reduce stress and/or promote growth.
Studies Included	Thirty-six U.S. and international studies published from 1997 to 2008
Participants in the Studies	HIV-positive participants from North America, South Africa, Australia, and Sweden
Settings	Settings were not reported for all the studies.
Outcomes	PTSD symptoms, anxiety, depression, drug misuse, PTG, suicide
Limitations of the Studies	The majority of studies were conducted in the United States, which likely does not accurately represent the global HIV population; PTG was underresearched; there were too few intervention studies to provide systematic support for any given intervention. The literature is limited and Western-biased. Subgroups of populations may have differential prevalence of PTSD, but there are insufficient studies for this to be definitively established. Studies outside of peer-reviewed journals were not included.

Results

There is good evidence that an HIV diagnosis and experiences during the course of illness are traumatic. PTSD has been shown to be prevalent in HIV-positive patients, and there seems to be good evidence in support of using standardized measures to track the course of the disorder in this population. This review examined HIV education, training in coping techniques, and support groups as interventions for HIV patients. Only coping interventions were shown to be effective in reducing PTSD symptoms; however, there is extremely limited evidence that interventions may affect the course of symptom experience. The evidence regarding PTG shows promise but is currently inadequate.