**Title**

**Author and affiliations**

**Background**

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) affects more than one million Australians. It has significant effects on individuals and their families and bears a large cost to the Australian community.

**Aims**

The aim of the PTSD Initiative study1 was to investigate the long-term health consequences of PTSD in a cohort of trauma-exposed Australian Vietnam veterans.

**Method**

Health information from 214 Vietnam veterans aged 60-88 years (108 with PTSD, 106 trauma-exposed controls) was obtained by clinical examination, pathology, and structured questionnaires. Statistical analysis was performed to determine the risk of morbidities independent of potential confounders (age, body mass index, smoking, alcohol, marital & employment status, and education).

**Results**

The total number of comorbidities was higher in those suffering with PTSD (17.7 vs. 14.1). After accounting for confounding factors, patients with PTSD were significantly more likely to have increased risk of myocardial infarction (3.7x increased risk), gastrointestinal complaints (including reflux, irritable bowel syndrome, and constipation, 2.3-8.4x increased risk), decreased respiratory function (FEV1% 5% lower, wheeze, 2x increased risk), abnormal liver texture (2x), sleep disturbance (obstructive sleep apnoea & restless legs, 2.2-2.5x), sleepiness, and hearing loss (2x increased risk).

**Conclusion**

Long-term PTSD is associated with multiple comorbidities. General practitioners are ideally positioned to diagnose and initiate management, and provide ongoing support for patients with PTSD to help prevent these long-term health consequences.

**References**

1McLeay, Harvey, et al. Physical comorbidities of post-traumatic stress disorder in Australian Vietnam War veterans. Med J Aust. 2017;206(6):251-257.

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