



NeuRA

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POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER LIBRARY

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POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER Factsheet

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What are alpha blockers?

Alpha blockers, such as prazosin, are medications that work as alpha-adrenergic receptor antagonists. They cross the blood-brain barrier, antagonise the alpha receptors in the central nervous system, and block the stress response. Higher than normal nocturnal central nervous system adrenergic activity that occurs in PTSD contributes to the disruption of normal rapid eye movement sleep. Prazosin reduces this adrenergic activity and therefore could be effective in treating posttraumatic arousal symptoms such as sleep disturbances and nightmares.

What is the evidence on prazosin for PTSD?

Moderate quality evidence found medium to large improvements in PTSD symptoms, nightmares, and sleep disturbances with prazosin than with placebo when compared at treatment endpoint. When comparing baseline to endpoint improvements over time, there was also a large improvement in nightmare frequency, and a trend, medium-sized improvement in PTSD symptoms with prazosin. However, there were no significant differences in sleep quality between prazosin and placebo, suggesting the placebo group may have had more sleep disturbances at baseline (the two reviews in this topic included mostly the same studies).

Prazosin resulted in more dry mouth than placebo, with no differences in dizziness, headache, nausea, lack of energy, muscle weakness or asthenia, drowsiness or somnolence, syncope, nasal congestion, or palpitations.

For more information see the technical table



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NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about PTSD and its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate

NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) Foundation
T 1300 888 019 F +61 2 9399 1082
ABN 57 008 429 961

Margarete Ainsworth Building
Barker Street, Randwick NSW 2031
PO Box 1165 Randwick Sydney NSW 2031 Australia

neura.edu.au