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POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER Factsheet

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Can PTSD be prevented?

Scientific understanding of the neurobiological changes occurring during PTSD onset shows memory consolidation appears particularly vulnerable to disruption in the first six hours after trauma, making this a crucial period for intervention for prevention of PTSD. This technical commentary presents the evidence on pharmaceutical interventions administered during this period.

What is the evidence on pharmaceutical interventions for prevention of PTSD?

Hydrocortisone is a glucocorticoid, which attenuates heightened fear response through increased removal of fear-inducing memories. Moderate to low quality evidence found a medium to large, reduced risk of PTSD within 3-6 months post-trauma in people with severe physical illness or injury receiving hydrocortisone post-trauma. Risks were not assessed in these samples, so contraindications need checking.

There was no benefit of hydrocortisone over placebo after 6 months post-trauma. There were also no benefits of propranolol, oxytocin, gabapentin, fish oil, dexamethasone, escitalopram, imipramine, or chloral hydrate for preventing PTSD at any time frame. Studies are few and small.

For more information see the technical table



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