



POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER Factsheet

August 2021

How is anger and aggression related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?

Excessive anger is often observed in people with PTSD and anxiety-related disorders. In PTSD, a propensity towards excessive anger may be apparent before exposure to a trauma, for example as a personality trait, or it could be a result of exposure to the trauma itself and a symptom of PTSD. Elevated anger in people with PTSD has clinical implications as it may be a barrier to effective treatment outcomes. Therefore, anger and aggression are key targets for improvement early in the treatment process.

What is the evidence for anger and aggression in people with PTSD?

Moderate to high quality evidence finds a large increase in difficulty with anger reported by people with PTSD compared to people without PTSD.

There were high levels of anger and hostility reported by veterans, police, and firefighters *prior to* being exposed to trauma and the subsequent development of PTSD.

In veterans *post-deployment*, the overall prevalence of any aggressive behaviour is around 36%, which is significantly higher than in veterans who have not had combat exposure. Veterans deployed to combat situations who subsequently develop PTSD show the highest levels of aggressive behaviour, particularly if they also misuse alcohol.

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