



POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER Factsheet

August 2021

What is learning ability?

Learning is the ability to acquire, or change, existing knowledge, behaviours, or skills. There are two distinct forms of learning: explicit (or declarative) learning occurs during a high level of consciousness regarding specific learnt content, for example, memorising information for an exam. Implicit (or procedural) learning is less conscious and refers to learning that is gained from task performance, for example, juggling. Explicit verbal learning can be measured with the Hopkins Verbal Learning test, the California Verbal Learning test and verbal list-learning, for example. The Brief Visuospatial memory test, the Rey design learning test, the Rey complex figure test, and visual reproduction all measure explicit visual learning. Implicit learning can be measured using the Serial Reaction Time task where learning is inferred from reduced reaction time to stimuli.

What is the evidence for learning ability in people with PTSD?

Moderate to low quality evidence finds a medium-sized effect showing traumatised children with PTSD had poorer learning ability than controls who were not exposed to trauma or PTSD, but not when compared to trauma-exposed controls (without PTSD).

Moderate to high quality evidence found small to medium-sized effects of poorer learning ability in adults with PTSD than in trauma-exposed or non-exposed controls.

For more information see the technical table

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) 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.