What is prevalence?

Prevalence represents the overall proportion of individuals in a population who have the disorder of interest. It is different from incidence, which represents only the new cases that have developed over a particular time period. Point prevalence is the proportion of individuals in a population who have the disorder at a given point in time (e.g., at one-month post-trauma), while period prevalence is the proportion of individuals in a population who have the disorder over specific time periods (e.g., one to two months post-trauma). Lifetime prevalence is the proportion of individuals in a population who have ever had the disorder and lifetime morbid risk also includes those who had the disorder but who were deceased at the time of the survey.

What is the evidence for spatial variation in the prevalence of PTSD?

Moderate quality evidence finds the overall lifetime prevalence of PTSD in the population is around 3.9%. Lifetime rates were higher in high-income countries (5%) than in upper-middle or low-middle income countries (both around 2%). Lifetime rates were higher in the WHO Western Pacific region (5.7%), the Western European region (4.0%) and the Americas (3.8%), than in the Eastern European region (2.4%), Africa (2.3%) and the Eastern Mediterranean region (2.1%). However, the pooled current and lifetime prevalence of PTSD in the Eastern Mediterranean region is around 7%. The 10-year prevalence of PTSD in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh) is around 17%.

For more information see the technical table