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Project Title

Cognitive decline over time in posttraumatic stress disorder and the role of cognitive reserve

Project Summary

Previous research has demonstrated that PTSD is associated with cognitive decline. In people with psychiatric illness, cognitive deficits are a consistent predictor of disability. So far, most of the research surrounding PTSD and cognitive changes has focused on younger adults, with little known about the relationship between PTSD and the trajectory of cognitive deficits as individuals age. Some lifestyle factors, including education, physical activity, social support, and mental stimulation, mitigate cognitive decline in other conditions. To date, there exists very limited research exploring the impact of these lifestyle factors on cognition in people with PTSD. We aim to: (1) examine the extent to which PTSD impact cognitive function over time (i.e., clinical impairment); (2) identify lifestyle factors that can help mitigate cognitive decline in individuals with PTSD (3) compare levels of decline and cognitive reserve factors that mitigate decline between civilians and veterans.

Keywords

Cognition, PTSD, Social support