



Letter to the Editor

Invited reply to "PTSD is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease"

Keywords:

Stress disorders
 Post-traumatic stress
 Psychological cardiovascular diseases
 September 11 terrorist attacks
 World Trade Center Attack, 2011
 Heart diseases
 Cohort studies
 Disasters
 Proportional hazards models
 Rescue work

We thank Dr. Boscarino for elaborating on the potential biological underpinnings of the association between posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and cardiovascular disease (CVD), and for raising the key question of the clinical applications of our findings.

There is mounting evidence of a link between PTSD and CVD. However, to our knowledge, the role of PTSD treatment in CVD prevention has not been evaluated (Dedert et al., 2010). This is an area ripe for investigation.

Although it remains uncertain whether effective PTSD treatment prevents CVD, there is ample evidence of the interdependence of physical and mental health problems among persons exposed to the 9/11 disaster (Li et al., 2011; Luft et al., 2011; Niles et al., 2011; Wisnivesky et al., 2011). Our study (Jordan et al., 2011) adds further support for the integration of physical and mental health care in clinical monitoring and treatment programs for 9/11 survivors.

The World Trade Center Health Registry is currently conducting a third round of surveys of its entire cohort. This ongoing survey has an expanded focus on CVD risk factors, as well as on risk factors for PTSD, including traumatic experiences other than the 9/11 disaster. It also includes questions about the use of medications for mental health conditions. Results may provide us with a more nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between PTSD and CVD, which could guide investigation of CVD prevention through PTSD treatment.

Conflict of interest statement

None.

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