



The Use of Exposure Treatments in Helping Patients with PTSD Recover from the Event

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RESEARCH QUESTION

To what extent can exposure to traumatic memories help patients with PTSD recover and move on from the event?

INTRODUCTION

One of the most prevalent treatments for PTSD is exposure therapy, which has patients confront triggers and reminders of the event head-on to reduce the intensity of reactions. Despite its prevalence, healthcare providers may view it as risky due to the stress it puts patients under and the fear of retraumatizing the patient. This research aims to analyze the safety, benefits, and drawbacks of the treatment based on current research.

METHODOLOGY

To get an accurate perspective on the topic, I used the databases 'PubMed' and 'Google Scholar' to search for studies and papers relating to the topic. I used the terms 'PTSD', 'exposure therapy', 'exposure treatment', and 'effectiveness of exposure therapy'. Once those articles had been gathered, I sorted them to find articles focusing on the effectiveness, risks, benefits, and outcomes of exposure therapy.

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RESULTS

The research I found pointed to exposure treatments being safe and beneficial in most cases. Treatments involving this will often lead to stress, especially in early stages, but as time goes on, reminders of the event usually become less upsetting, the way exposure therapy is supposed to do. There was a risk of memory amplification, where recounting the memory can make it feel more traumatic than it initially was. While this was unlikely to happen in therapeutic settings, a larger challenge was the pushback against giving patients exposure treatments from therapists. This hesitancy can make them less likely to use these treatments or do them in a way that doesn't adequately help the patient address what they want to improve on

CONCLUSION

Based on the research found, exposure treatments are a safe and effective form of treatment for PTSD when done in a therapeutic setting. The main hurdle is the general perspective on exposure treatments among healthcare professionals. To counteract this, it is important to train therapists working with PTSD on how to incorporate exposure treatments into therapy and how best to administer it for different patients based on their needs and limits. Doing this opens up the opportunity to learn more about how to personalize it for patients.

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