



Enhancing Exposure Therapy for PTSD: Virtual Reality and Imaginal Exposure with a Cognitive Enhancer

Treatment:

- Participants randomized to either modified Prolonged Exposure (PE, evidenced-based treatment for PTSD) or Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy (PE using a Virtual Iraq/Afghanistan environment to augment imaginal exposure)
 - Within each of these arms, participants are then randomized to receive placebo or a low dose of d-cycloserine (DCS), an antibiotic related to ciprofloxacin, which does nothing by itself, but when given before other treatments seems to improve and accelerate responses to therapy

Logistics:

- Treatment provided at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) on the campus of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda
- Participants must be eligible for care in the Department of Defense healthcare system
- Nine 90-minute therapy sessions and five assessments, including the follow-up period
- Modest compensation for each assessment visit

Inclusion Criteria Include:

- Symptoms of Combat Related PTSD after Iraq or Afghanistan deployment
- May have multiple traumas, including non-combat, if combat is a contributing factor
- Medically healthy and willing to take study drug
- Able to provide informed consent and to understand assessment instruments

Exclusion Criteria Include:

- Lifetime or current diagnosis of schizophrenia or other psychotic disorder, bipolar disorder or current suicidal or homicidal risk
- Participation in a clinical trial to treat PTSD during the past 3 months
- Substance dependence in the past 3 months
- Current unstable medical condition
- history of seizures
- Pregnant or breast-feeding

Personnel:

- Exposure treatment (PE or VR) is given by Dr. Suzanne Leaman
- PIs for this multi-site study include Dr. Michael Roy (WRNMMC), Dr. Barbara Rothbaum (Emory University), Dr. JoAnne Difede (Weill Cornell Medical Center) and Dr. Skip Rizzo (USC)
- Regular protocol compliance review is done by Dr. Lib Hembree and Dr. Patti Koenan.

Note: Patients are asked not to participate in any other exposure therapy while enrolled in this treatment, and if on any psychotropic medication are asked to keep it at a stable dose during the time of study participation..

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