

Southern Adventist University
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Reflection Paper

By

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Inman, D., Silver, S., & Doghramji, K. (1990). Sleep Disturbance in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: A Comparison with non-PTSD Insomnia. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 3(3), 429-437. Retrieved from SocINDEX with Full Text database.

Article Summary

The article covered this week was “Sleep Disturbance in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: A comparison with non-PTSD Insomnia.” The article randomly selected thirty-five Vietnam combat veterans between the ages of 25 and 60 from the inpatient PTSD unit of the Veterans Administration and thirty-seven patients who sought treatment for insomnia at the Thomas Jefferson University Sleep Disorder Center. The civilian subjects reported that they had been suffering from insomnia for at least six months.

Both the PTSD group and the non-PTSD group were both given the Sleep Disturbance Inventory test which contained items on general sleep information, Insomnia, Dreams and Nightmares, Daytime Fatigue, and other symptoms of PTSD. The findings were somewhat astounding in that the PTSD group had significant differences between nightmares of Vietnam combat veterans and non-PTSD nightmares sufferers.

Critique

I found it somewhat odd that the study found that 54% of combat veterans have sleep disorders and 51% have intrusive thoughts while trying to go to sleep. When comparing the two groups it was found that 59% of the combat veterans researched had an incidence of nightmares as opposed to only 13% of those without combat experience.

When comparing the nightmares of each group it was found that the nightmares of the Vietnam combat veterans were more of a replication of an actual event; were repetitive with

almost exactly the same content; and were associated with more concurrent body movement in that veterans would awake to find that they had torn the sheets off the bed or had been yelling while asleep. The article showed a direct correlation between combat experience and sleep disturbance.

Reflection

Usually veterans have more anxiety symptoms such as fear of going to sleep, fear or returning back to sleep once awoken, fear of the dark, and thought of Vietnam during the night. Being in combat myself I believe this can be directly linked to incidents which occur during combat. In Iraq much like Vietnam the night was a particularly dangerous time requiring a higher degree of alertness. Combat trauma occurring at night was a common event and the common pattern was to stay awake for as long as possible taking short naps during the daylight hours. Many times these Veterans were awoken to an impending attack and had just seconds to react and when daylight arose they would see the carnage of the incident that had taken place. A lot of times these impending night time attacks feel like dreams and veterans wake up as if they are still in the field and having to fend off enemy forces.

Although the present study was just a small glimpse into a much larger problem more research on the problem needs to be done. Many times individuals with PTSD are labeled as crazy and out of control by people who have no clue what PTSD is. When the sleep patterns of these veterans is disrupted in such violent way confusion and disorientation on awaking happens. The general fatigue throughout the day may contribute to deterioration in their reported overall level of functioning. This has led many veterans to experience fatigue that's affects their mood, job, and family relationships. Several single-subject case designs are now being used to respond

to this epidemic and see what treatments could best be implemented to help the individuals in the future.