

**Presented at: American Psychosomatic Society, 61st Annual Meeting,
Phoenix, AZ, March 8, 2003**

Abstract 1237

**POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AND AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE
AMONG VIETNAM VETERANS**

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To assess for an association between post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and autoimmune disease, the medical histories of 1,972 male era and 2,490 Vietnam theater veterans were examined about 20 year after discharge. ADs were identified based on reported medications, hospitalizations, medical treatments and physician diagnoses. Two PTSD measures were used. One was based on the Diagnostic Interview Schedule, where men were classified with PTSD if they met the criteria in the past 30 days (n=54). A second PTSD measure, "comorbid PTSD," also was developed (n=124). This was constructed from a factor analysis consisting of PSTD symptoms in the past 6 months, plus hypochondriasis, depression, hysteria, paranoia and schizophrenia symptoms measured by core scales of the MMPI test. A 95-percentile cut-off was used to define this condition. A veteran was classified as having AD if he had one or more of 20 ADs since discharge, such as rheumatoid arthritis or inflammatory bowel disease. Logistic regression was used to assess the association between PTSD and AD, after controlling for military history, age, education, race, intelligence, and history of substance abuse, cigarette smoking, and anti-social personality. While no difference was found between era and theater veterans, theater veterans with either current PTSD or comorbid PTSD were more likely to have AD (Odds ratio [OR]=2.6, 95% confidence interval [CI]=1.2-5.6, p=0.016; OR=3.3, 95% CI=2.0-5.7, p<0.0001, respectively). However, when entered into the same multivariate model, only comorbid PTSD was significant (OR=3.1, 95% CI=1.7-5.5, p<0.001). Because AD was based in part on self-report, a comorbid PTSD classification was developed without hypochondriasis. This PTSD measure also was significant (p<0.01). Finally, consistent with AD, men with comorbid PTSD had abnormally higher T-lymphocytes, % lymphocytes, % band neutrophils, triiodothyronine, and lower dehydroepiandrosterone (all p<0.05). In summary, PTSD may be associated with autoimmune disease among male war veterans.