

Large hormone dose may reduce risk of post-traumatic stress disorder

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A new study by Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) researchers found that a high dose of cortisone could help reduce the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The article appears in *Biological Psychiatry*, Volume 64, Issue 8 (October 15, 2008), pages 708-717.

In an animal model of PTSD, high doses of a cortisol-related substance, corticosterone, prevented negative consequences of stress exposure, including increased startle response and behavioral freezing when exposed to reminders of the stress.

Cortisol is secreted into the blood stream through the adrenal glands, which are active when the body responds to stress. It is known as "the stress hormone" because it is also secreted in higher levels during the body's "fight or flight" response to stress, and is responsible for several stress-related changes in the body.

According to Dr. Hagit Cohen of the Anxiety and Stress Research Unit at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, "A single intervention with high-dose corticosterone immediately after exposure to a psychogenic stressor was highly effective in reducing the incidence of PTSD-like behaviors and improved the resilience to subsequent trauma-cue exposure in an innovative controlled prospective animal study."

"Single high-dose corticosteroid treatment may thus be worthy of clinical investigation as a possible avenue for early pharmaco-therapeutic

intervention in the acute phase, aimed at prevention of chronic stress-related disorders, such as PTSD," Cohen explains. "In this sense, it brings treatment of PTSD to a new era – an era of secondary prevention, an era of the golden hours."

Source: American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

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