

# Blueberries show promise as treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder

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Up to 8 percent of people in the U.S. suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as the result of witnessing or being the victim of a traumatic event. People with PTSD have been in a situation in which they were at risk of death, serious injury or sexual violence or have seen first-hand loved ones faces such threats. They may experience flashbacks, emotional detachment and jumpiness, among other symptoms that affect their ability to function in everyday life.

Currently, the only approved therapy for PTSD is selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), such as Zoloft and Paxil, but their effectiveness is marginal. Now researchers at Louisiana State University have found that a readily available superfood—the blueberry—could be an effective treatment.

Philip J. Ebenezer will present "The Neuro-Protective Efficacy of Blueberry in an Animal Model of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)" in a poster session on Monday, March 30, at the Experimental Biology meeting (Boston Convention and Exhibition Center).

Ebenezer et al. have previously demonstrated that SSRIs increase levels of serotonin (5-HT) and the [neurotransmitter norepinephrine](#) (NE) and that the increased NE may reduce the effectiveness of SSRI therapy. In the new study, the research team looked at the ability of blueberries to modulate neurotransmitter levels in a rat model of PTSD. Researchers supplemented some of the rats with a blueberry-enriched (2 percent) diet and others with a control diet. A third control group did not have PTSD

and received a standard diet (without blueberries).

They found that PTSD rats who did not receive blueberries demonstrated a predictable increase in NE and 5-HT when compared with the [control group](#). However, the PTSD rats that received blueberries showed a beneficial increase in 5-HT with no effect on NE levels, suggesting that [blueberries](#) can effectively modulate neurotransmitters in PTSD.

Provided by American Physiological Society

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