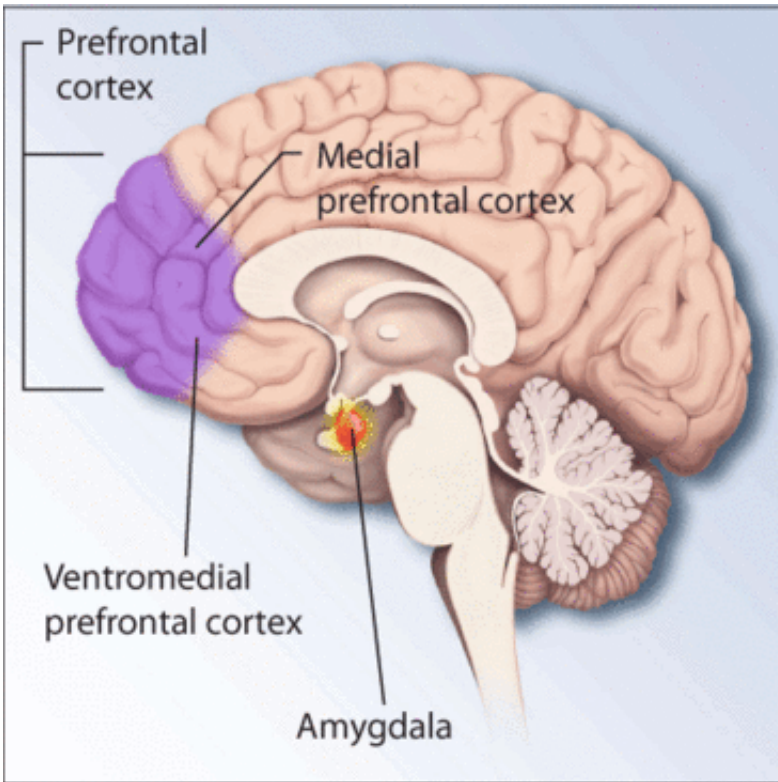


No link found between PTSD and cancer risk

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Regions of the brain associated with stress and posttraumatic stress disorder.
Credit: National Institutes of Health

In the largest study to date that examines Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a risk factor for cancer, researchers from Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM), have shown no evidence of an association.

The study, which appears in the *European Journal of Epidemiology*, is consistent with other population-based studies that report [stressful life](#)

[events](#) generally are not associated with [cancer incidence](#). In addition to corroborating results of other studies, this large population sample allowed for important stratified analyses that showed no strong evidence of associations even among select groups of the population.

The association between stress and cancer has been discussed in scientific literature for more than 70 years. Despite plausible theories that would support this association, findings from clinical research have been mixed.

Researchers compared the rate of various cancer diagnoses among people with PTSD with the standardized cancer rate from the general population in the same time period using data from the Danish national medical and social registers. They found PTSD was not associated with an increased risk for cancer.

"The general public may have a perception that stress contributes to cancer occurrence and given the ubiquity of PTSD and cancer and their costs to individuals and society, any observed associations could have meaningful public health implications," explained corresponding author Jaimie L. Gradus, DSc, MPH, assistant professor of psychiatry and epidemiology at BUSM and an epidemiologist at the National Center for PTSD. "This study, however, provided no evidence that a severe chronic stress disorder such as PTSD is associated with cancer incidence.

According to the researchers, the large sample and long study period allowed them to examine associations that have not been studied previously as they were able to look at rare [cancer](#) outcomes and associations among important subgroups.

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

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