

PTSD symptomatology linked to increased risk of RA

March 9 2016



(HealthDay)—Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptomatology is

associated with the risk of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in women, according to a study published in the March issue of *Arthritis Care & Research*.

Yvonne C. Lee, M.D., from Harvard Medical School in Boston, and colleagues examined the correlation between PTSD symptoms and RA risk in a subset of 54,224 participants of the Nurses' Health Study II. Participants completed the Brief Trauma Questionnaire and a screen for PTSD symptoms and were classified according to trauma exposure and number of PTSD symptoms.

From 1989 to 2011, 239 incident RA cases were identified. The researchers found that in models adjusted for age, race, and socioeconomic status, the hazard ratio for four or more PTSD symptoms and incident RA was 1.76, compared to no history of trauma/PTSD symptoms. There was an increase in the risk for RA with increasing number of PTSD [symptoms](#) (P = 0.01). The hazard ratio for RA remained elevated (1.60) when smoking was added to the model. The correlation persisted in a subgroup analysis excluding women who smoked before PTSD onset (hazard ratio, 1.68).

"Further studies are necessary to examine the role of other behaviors and clinical characteristics, such as alcohol consumption and obesity, as potential confounders and/or mediators of the association between PTSD and risk for RA," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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Citation: PTSD symptomatology linked to increased risk of RA (2016, March 9) retrieved 24

April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-03-ptsd-symptomatology-linked-ra.html>

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