

Violence declines during intensive PTSD treatment, study says

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

Combat veterans diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) experienced declines in violent behavior while undergoing treatment in an intensive Veterans Health Administration (VHA) PTSD program, according to a new study by Yale Department of Psychiatry faculty

published online in the journal *Psychiatric Services*.

The study by first author Alec Buchanan, MD, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry, and colleagues Elina Stefanovics, Ph.D., and Robert Rosenheck, MD, examined data from over 35,000 U.S. military veterans treated in specialized VHA PTSD programs. The findings revealed significant declines in [violent behavior](#) between the time veterans entered the program, and four months after they were discharged.

The authors acknowledge that it's impossible to know through their observational study whether treatment alone caused the decline in violent behavior. However, the reduction was greatest when correlated with declines in substance abuse and PTSD symptoms which suggests that focusing on those symptoms may help reduce violence in PTSD.

More information: Alec Buchanan et al. Correlates of Reduced Violent Behavior Among Patients Receiving Intensive Treatment for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, *Psychiatric Services* (2017). [DOI: 10.1176/appi.ps.201700253](#)

Provided by Yale University

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