

PTSD linked to faster cognitive decline in middle-aged women

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Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is associated with accelerated

cognitive decline among middle-aged women, according to a study published online June 30 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Andrea L. Roberts, Ph.D., M.P.H., from the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, and colleagues conducted a cohort study involving participants from the Nurses' Health Study II to examine the association between PTSD and decline in cognitive function over time. Data were included for 12,270 trauma-exposed women who completed one to five cognitive assessments; the mean age at baseline cognitive assessment was 61.1 years.

The researchers found worse cognitive trajectories in association with a higher number of PTSD symptoms. Women with the highest symptom level (six to seven symptoms) had a significantly worse rate of change in both learning and working memory and psychomotor speed and attention compared with those with no PTSD symptoms, after adjustment for demographic characteristics. When additionally adjusting for [behavioral factors](#) and [health conditions](#), associations were unchanged; further adjustment for practice effects and comorbid depression led to a partial attenuation, but the associations were still evident.

"These findings also highlight the importance of PTSD prevention and treatment to ensure healthy cognitive aging and suggest the value of earlier cognitive screening among women with PTSD," the authors write.

One author disclosed receipt of grants and fees from various companies.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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