

Partial PTSD More Common Than Full in PC

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TORONTO — A significant portion of primary care patients may have partial posttraumatic stress disorder and appear to have health and physical functioning problems and medical care utilization similar to patients with the full-blown disorder, according to data presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies.

A significant portion of trauma victims don't meet DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for PTSD but still experience significantly higher distress than nontraumatized individuals, said Karen Gillock, Ph.D., a professor of psychiatry at Dartmouth College in Lebanon, N.H.

Dr. Gillock and her colleagues surveyed patients between the ages of 18 and 60 years, who presented to one of two primary care clinics associated with a medical center in rural New England, for symp-

toms of PTSD. A total of 232 patients completed the surveys; the group was 69% female, 95% white, and had a mean age of 42 years. The prevalence of full PTSD in this sample was 9%, a rate similar to those reported in other studies. Strikingly, the prevalence of partial PTSD was 25%, she said at the meeting, cosponsored by Boston University.

Compared with those without PTSD, patients with both full and partial PTSD were more likely to be hospitalized and

had more medical visits. Patients in the full PTSD, partial PTSD, and no PTSD groups averaged 3.4, 2.5, and 1.9 medical visits, respectively, in the past 3 months.

The full PTSD group had the highest scores on the Wahler Physical Symptom Inventory, followed by the partial PTSD group, with the no PTSD group having the lowest scores. Those with no PTSD had the highest functioning, followed by those with partial PTSD, and, last, by those with full PTSD. ■

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