



International Society
for Traumatic Stress Studies

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Self-Managed, Web-Based PTSD Treatment Program Increases Care and Decreases Symptoms for Combat Veterans

DEERFIELD, Ill. — November 8, 2012 — Researchers at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may have found a new way to provide treatment to underserved military members and veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The Web-based, self-management tool—called DESTRESS-PC—required service members to log in to a secure website three times per week for six weeks. All study participants also received nurse care management by way of phone check-ins every two weeks and feedback to their primary care providers.

The research was presented at the International Society for Traumatic Stress (ISTSS) Annual Meeting in Los Angeles.

“Web models of PTSD self-management, when supported by primary care providers and integrated into the process of clinic care, can improve short-term PTSD symptom outcomes and may allow underserved service members to receive necessary treatment,” said the study’s co-author Dr. Charles Engel from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center/Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland.

Study participants were 80 veterans of recent conflicts with PTSD seeking treatment at one of three Veterans Affairs (VA) and four Army clinics. Outcomes were assessed at 6, 12, and 18 weeks.

DESTRESS-PC participants showed a significantly greater decrease in PTSD and depression symptoms compared to those who didn’t use the program. Furthermore, the number of logins to DESTRESS-PC correlated significantly with decreased PTSD symptoms.

The research team concluded that the DESTRESS-PC may be of most use in individuals who are reluctant to seek care.

About the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS)

The ISTSS is an international, interdisciplinary professional organization that promotes advancement and exchange of knowledge about traumatic stress including understanding the scope and consequences of traumatic exposure; preventing traumatic events and ameliorating their consequences; and advocating for the field of traumatic stress. For more information, visit www.istss.org.

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