

Ketamine Therapy for Veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: A Focused Review

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Introduction

Currently, **87% of veterans are exposed to traumatic events**. Veterans that are diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are **58% more likely to commit suicide than those without PTSD**.

Antidepressants are the only first-line pharmacological treatment for PTSD, and they only achieve remission of symptoms in 20-30% of patients.

Ketamine, a medicine previously used as an anesthetic, was recently FDA-approved to treat depression. Trials are being conducted showing favorable results in treating veterans with PTSD.



<https://static.independent.co.uk/s3fs-public/thumbnails/image/2016/06/30/11/iraq-war-1.jpg?quality=75&width=640&auto=webp>

Methodology

- 8 quantitative articles and 2 qualitative articles were found
- Keywords used were “ketamine,” “therapy,” and “PTSD”
- Articles are from the Nursing & Allied Health Database

Results

Populations	Methods	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civilians with PTSD in ketamine clinics • Veterans with PTSD in ketamine clinics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants were given a venous infusion of ketamine • Veterans self-reported results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civilians had reduction in PTSD symptoms • Veterans reported relief from PTSD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civilians with PTSD in ketamine clinics • Veterans with PTSD in ketamine clinics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants were given ketamine with talk therapy • Symptoms were recorded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All veterans had a reduction in PTSD symptoms • Ketamine increased impact of therapy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans with PTSD and suicidal thoughts • Civilians with suicidal thoughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans were given ketamine in the emergency room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants had greater reduction in suicidal thoughts with ketamine



<https://images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/v1/5d2fa63a2e13520001d91962/1563558666744-VLP24T5YRFB6PFR06TJD/Ketamine+Therapy+for+Depression>

Patient Receiving Ketamine Therapy



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Discussion of Results

- When participants switched from placebo to ketamine with therapy, therapeutic responses went from 25 to 49 days.
- Ketamine’s antidepressant and anti anxiety effects decreased drop-out rates and PTSD severity in therapy patients.
- Ketamine can even help reduce deadly coping behaviors such as drinking
- Limitations include small population sizes and short length of study
- Larger sample sizes are needed
- More longitudinal studies are needed

Conclusion

Ketamine helped veterans and civilians experience reductions in symptoms such as intrusive thoughts, depression, and thoughts of suicide.

These studies give promising evidence that raise hope for ketamine as a novel treatment for PTSD.



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