

4-19-2023

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Keenan Mai  
*Dominican University of California*

<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2023.NURS.RP.04>

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### Recommended Citation

Mai, Keenan, "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Among Healthcare Professionals Working in Emergency Transport and Critical Care Settings" (2023). *Nursing | Student Research Posters*. 29.

<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2023.NURS.RP.04>

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# Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Among Healthcare Professionals Working in Emergency Transport and Critical Care Settings

Keenan Mai, N.S. | Dominican University of California



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## BACKGROUND

- Healthcare professionals working in acute care settings are exposed to a variety of occupational stressors almost every day, and certain specialty units may be more susceptible to events that precipitate a decline in mental health status.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), whether diagnosed or not, is an issue among professional healthcare providers and especially those in high acuity settings such as the emergency department (ED), intensive care unit (ICU), and ground or air based critical care transport (CCT).
- This review aims to identify which units have the highest incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in both civilian and military settings.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

- Quantitative: Between 4.4% (Swearingen et. al., 2017) and 70% (Levi & Moss, 2022) of respondents met symptom criteria to be diagnosed with PTSD.
- Qualitative: Participants emphasized why the occurrences within these critical care units are to blame for occupational stress, i.e. lack of leadership support, overburden, emotional family scenarios (Mealer et.al., 2017).

## RESEARCH QUESTION

How do PTSD Rates Compare Among Healthcare Professionals Working in Emergency Transport and Critical Care settings?

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL

### Study Design

- A Quantitative Cross Sectional design will be used to gather data on Critical Care Transport (CCT) Nurses in military and civilian settings.

### Participants

- Participants will be recruited through the Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society of Nursing, the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN), Army Nurse Corps Association (ANCA), the Navy Nurse Corps Association (NNCA), and the Society of Air Force Nurses (SAFN).
- The sample will include approximately 100 participants; 50 from civilian settings, and 50 from military settings.

### Measures

- Self report online surveys will be utilized to administer the PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5) for civilian nurses and the PTSD Checklist - Military Version (PCL-M) for military nurses.
- An informed consent acknowledgement will be obtained.
- Additional survey items include duration of employment in the critical care position.

### Analysis

- A positive test on the PCL-5 is represented by a score of 33 or higher
- A positive test on the PCL-M is determined by selecting 1 B item (questions 1-5), 3 C items (questions 6-12), and at least 2 D items (questions 13-17) as "moderate" or higher.

## CONCLUSION

- The significance of identifying at risk populations can be incredibly effective in reducing the incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder within critical care teams. In carrying out the research proposal, the data received will suggest what areas of healthcare need attention, and more importantly, a greater emphasis on combating the negative effects of critical care experiences on nurses.
- In order to mitigate the effects of this endemic, we first need to identify the most susceptible areas, then evaluate potential approaches to reducing the incidence of workplace acquired PTSD within CCT nurses.

In the past month, how much were you bothered by:	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
1. Repeated, disturbing, and unwanted memories of the stressful experience?	0	1	2	3	4
2. Repeated, disturbing dreams of the stressful experience?	0	1	2	3	4
3. Suddenly feeling or acting as if the stressful experience were actually happening again (as if you were actually back there reliving it)?	0	1	2	3	4
4. Feeling very upset when something reminded you of the stressful experience?	0	1	2	3	4
5. Having strong physical reactions when something reminded you of the stressful experience (for example, heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating)?	0	1	2	3	4
6. Avoiding memories, thoughts, or feelings related to the stressful experience?	0	1	2	3	4
7. Avoiding external reminders of the stressful experience (for example, people, places, conversations, activities, objects, or situations)?	0	1	2	3	4
8. Trouble remembering important parts of the stressful experience?	0	1	2	3	4
9. Having strong negative beliefs about yourself, other people, or the world (for example, having thoughts such as: I am bad, there is something seriously wrong with me, no one can be trusted, the world is completely dangerous)?	0	1	2	3	4
10. Blaming yourself or someone else for the stressful experience or what happened after it?	0	1	2	3	4
11. Having strong negative feelings such as fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame?	0	1	2	3	4
12. Loss of interest in activities that you used to enjoy?	0	1	2	3	4
13. Feeling distant or cut off from other people?	0	1	2	3	4
14. Trouble experiencing positive feelings (for example, being unable to feel happiness or have loving feelings for people close to you)?	0	1	2	3	4
15. Irritable behavior, angry outbursts, or acting aggressively?	0	1	2	3	4
16. Taking too many risks or doing things that could cause you harm?	0	1	2	3	4
17. Being "super-alert" or watchful or on guard?	0	1	2	3	4
18. Feeling jittery or easily startled?	0	1	2	3	4
19. Having difficulty concentrating?	0	1	2	3	4
20. Trouble falling or staying asleep?	0	1	2	3	4

	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
1. Repeated, disturbing memories, thoughts, or images of a stressful military experience?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Repeated, disturbing dreams of a stressful military experience?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Suddenly acting or feeling as if a stressful military experience were happening again (as if you were reliving it)?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Feeling very upset when something reminded you of a stressful military experience?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Having physical reactions (e.g., heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating) when something reminded you of a stressful military experience?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Avoiding thinking about or talking about a stressful military experience or avoiding having feelings related to it?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Avoiding activities or situations because they reminded you of a stressful military experience?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Trouble remembering important parts of a stressful military experience?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Loss of interest in activities that you used to enjoy?	1	2	3	4	5
10. Feeling distant or cut off from other people?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Feeling emotionally numb or being unable to have loving feelings for those close to you?	1	2	3	4	5
12. Feeling as if your future will somehow be cut short?	1	2	3	4	5
13. Trouble falling or staying asleep?	1	2	3	4	5
14. Feeling irritable or having angry outbursts?	1	2	3	4	5
15. Having difficulty concentrating?	1	2	3	4	5
16. Being "super-alert" or watchful or on guard?	1	2	3	4	5
17. Feeling jittery or easily startled?	1	2	3	4	5

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## EMAIL CONTACT

keenan.mai@students.dominican.edu