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DEVELOPMENT OF A HEALTH BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION FOR ADULTS WITH PTSD

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Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), is a disorder of extreme stress/anxiety responses to a psychologically traumatic experience, has been associated with significantly greater incidence of heart disease and prevalence of metabolic syndrome. This higher risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD) in PTSD appears to be, in part, due to difficulties maintaining healthy lifestyles (e.g., weight management through healthy diet and regular physical activity, adequate sleep) and coping with daily stressors. The need for developing effective CVD prevention programs for adults with PTSD is increasingly evident. Therefore additional research is needed to examine programs that may reduce health risk behaviours and prevent early onset of CVD. The present project is a pilot study to examine whether a treatment program focused on healthy lifestyle behaviours (physical activity, good nutrition, sleep hygiene) and stress management will be associated with reductions in the levels of CVD risk variables (e.g., body weight, lipids, blood pressure) for adults with chronic PTSD and least one of the targeted health risks. This presentation illustrates the development of the intervention program, and the design of the study measurement. Results of preliminary cases will assist in determining whether targeting health behaviours as a novel component of PTSD treatment aids in reducing CVD risk.

Biography

Jeffrey L. Kibler completed his Ph.D. from the University of Miami and postdoctoral studies from the University of Mississippi Medical Centre. He is the director of the Biofeedback and Health Psychology Centre at Nova Southeastern University. He has more than 30 scientific publications and routinely serves as a grant reviewer for U.S. federal and Italian Ministry of Health proposals for research grant funding.

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