

WG 3 (Psychological Health)

## Pharmacological Treatment for ASD Retrospective Case- Control Study

**Kobi Weissmehl, Carmel Kalla.**

Medical Corps, IDF.

### Background and Rationale:

The collected information on treating Acute Stress Disorder (ASD) shows that cognitive-behavioral therapy is effective, but there is no evidence supporting the effectiveness of anxiolytic and sedative medications in preventing PTSD. However, due to the clinical needs of patients, medications are widely used based on clinicians' preferences, despite limited and low-quality studies. Since October 7th, hundreds of soldiers have been treated for ASD in Combat Stress Reaction units, both pharmacologically and non-pharmacologically. The study aims to compare the medications used for treating ASD in IDF soldiers and assess their impact on the progression to PTSD.

### Research Methodology:

The study is a retrospective case-control analysis involving active-duty IDF soldiers diagnosed with ASD and treated in the Combat Stress Reaction units during the Iron Swords war (October 2023 - May 2024). A sample of 80 soldiers treated with CBT and 80 soldiers treated with CBT and medications will be analyzed. Data will be collected from the military's computerized patient records system (CPR) for both the initial treatment and outcomes.

### Results:

The study will analyze the relationship between pharmacological/ non-pharmacological treatment and PTSD development using a Chi-square test and odds ratio. Multivariate logistic regression will control for severity and demographic factors. Dichotomous and categorical variables will be presented as frequencies and percentages, while continuous variables will be shown with mean, standard deviation, median, and range.

### Conclusions:

Due to limited and low-quality studies on pharmacological treatment for ASD symptoms, there are no consensus guidelines, and significant variability exists among clinicians. The research may clarify existing knowledge and help refine the choice of the most effective treatment, possibly contributing to prevention of PTSD among soldiers.

WG 3 (Psychological Health)

## Effectiveness of a New Group Therapy Protocol Based on Written Exposure Therapy (WET) for IDF Combatants with PTSD

**Ofir Ohayon, Uzi Bechor, Nirit Yavnai, Jacob Rotschild, Leah Shelef.**

Medical Corps, IDF.

### Background and Rationale:

Exposure to combat may influence the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Although Written Exposure Therapy (WET) is an effective treatment for PTSD in soldiers, there is limited evidence supporting its effectiveness in a group therapy setting. Considering the efficacy of the treatment protocol in individual therapy, efforts were made to adapt the protocol for group therapy. This study examined the outcomes of the group-based application of the protocol to offer an evidence-based, trauma-focused treatment capable of addressing the needs of multiple patients simultaneously.

### Method:

This is a cohort study conducted from October 7, 2023, to August 1, 2024, during the Iron Swords War. Subjective Unit of Distress (SUDS) were assessed across five WET meetings. Additionally, we utilized the PTSD Checklist (PCL-5), the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS), the Negative Mood Regulation Scale (NMR), and the Group Cohesiveness Scale (GCS) both before and after participants engaged in group therapy based on WET. We used a Repeated Measures test to evaluate the linear association of SUDS scores along the five WET active treatment sessions.

### Results:

Of the 45 participants (mean age 29.58 [SD 5.88]), 80% (n = 36) were stationed in the Gaza zone, and 13.3% were officers (n = 6). The analysis revealed a significant difference before the start of the treatment and in the end in Total PCL, NMR, and GCS. Additionally, the four PCL sub-scales were found significant, and only awareness (DERS) was found statistically significant. A linear correlation trend was found between the end-of-session SUDS scores from the five active treatment sessions of WET.

### Conclusion:

Our findings contribute to an increasing body of literature demonstrating the initial effectiveness of WET in a group setting.