

Feasibility of a Preventative Intervention to Reduce Posttraumatic Stress in Motor Vehicle Collision Survivors

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Introduction

- Millions of Americans present to US Emergency Departments (EDs) each year for evaluation after motor vehicle collision (MVC), and > 90% of these individuals are discharged to home after ED evaluation.
- More than 30% of such individuals develop MVC-related posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but no interventions to prevent/reduce PTSD symptoms in these patients are available.
- A brief 8 question ED-based risk stratification tool was recently developed to help identify ED patients at increased risk of PTSD.¹
- The **Written Exposure Therapy to Improve Lives after Stress Exposure (WISE)** Trial, developed in partnership with collaborators from the National Center for PTSD, tests the feasibility of a 5-session written exposure therapy telehealth intervention to reduce the burden of PTSD symptoms among individuals identified via ED screening tool as high risk.

Methods

- The WISE Trial (Figure 1) was adapted from in-person interventions with demonstrated efficacy for PTSD symptom reduction in veterans with established PTSD.
- This pilot trial (n=40) is being performed in individuals who present to one of 5 Emergency Departments (Table 1) for care after MVC and screen positive as high risk.
- Enrolled participants are randomized to five 45min virtual therapy sessions (via Zoom) consisting of either written exposure therapy (n=20) or unemotional writing control (n=20).
- Baseline and serial follow-up assessments of PTSD and related symptoms are performed via self-report surveys prior to the first telehealth session and at 4, 8, and 12 week follow-up.

Results

- To date, **441/603 (73%)** of MVC survivors approached have been willing to be screened.
- Among those screened, **103/441 (23%)** were at increased risk of PTSD and eligible to participate.
- Among these eligible individuals, **43/103 (42%)** agreed to receive further information regarding the study following ED discharge, and **21/43 (48%)** of those contacted were enrolled.
- Among those enrolled, **18/21 (85%)** either have completed all 5 teletherapy sessions or are on track to complete all 5 sessions.
- All individuals who completed the therapy course have completed 4 and 12 week follow-up assessments, and 90% have completed 8 week assessment.

Conclusions

- Data from this ongoing trial suggest that the study protocol is feasible.
- Efficacy data will be evaluated after study completion. At current recruitment pace, all follow-ups will be completed by 10/23.

References

1. Jones et al. *Ann Emerg Med* 2022, PMID 36328855

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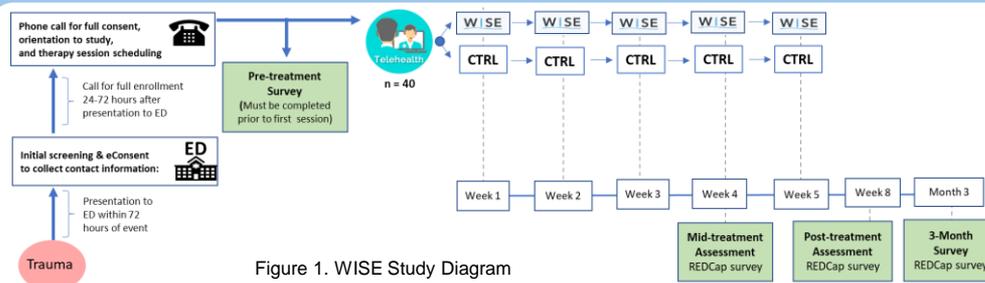


Figure 1. WISE Study Diagram

Table 1. Study Sites

Washington University in St. Louis
Henry Ford Hospital
University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School
University of Florida at Jacksonville
Indiana University