

# **PTSD and Self-reported Physical Health in Victims of Crime: Impact of Counselling on these Symptoms**

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This study examined specific self-reported physical health symptoms and PTSD symptomatology in a sample of 59 victims of crime five to seven months after these symptoms had initially been assessed. The aim was to explore whether counselling was associated with a significant reduction in PTSD symptoms, and a concomitant slight reduction in physical health complaints in those diagnosed with PTSD. Repeated measures analyses of covariance, with depression as a covariate, revealed an overall reduction in PTSD symptoms for the entire sample, but little change in health symptom reporting over time. Counselling status was not significant in either case. The sample was split into two groups depending on whether short- (less than 8 sessions) or long-term counselling was received. Short-term (or no) counselling was associated with a significant reduction in PTSD symptoms and a non-significant trend towards reduced health symptom reporting in the PTSD group, whereas longer-term counselling was associated with no change in PTSD symptoms and a greater endorsement of self-reported health problems over time. These results suggest that shorter-term counselling may be more structured and focussed in treating PTSD and associated health symptoms, while also raising questions about the effectiveness of longer-term counselling with this complex client group.

