

Editor's Note

Emerging Issues in Traumatic Stress Studies

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This special section of the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* includes 10 articles that collectively present some of the key issues facing the field of traumatic stress studies in 2007. These articles draw on work that was presented at the 22nd International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) Annual Meeting held in Hollywood, California in November 2006. There are three groups of articles presented in this special section.

The first section, including articles by Amaya-Jackson and DeRosa, Wagner and colleagues, and Zatzick and Galea, concerns issues that are pertinent to clinical practice. These articles discuss particular considerations about the development, and application of trauma-focused intervention for both adults and children. The second section, including articles by Bush and colleagues, Lyons and Parker, Yehuda and Flory, and Ozbay and colleagues, concerns issues pertinent to biologic inquiry about the consequences of traumatic events. The authors of these articles discuss both the biology of short-term traumatic stress reactions and the neurobiologic mechanisms that may explain the relations between traumatic event exposure and long-term psychological functioning.

Together these two first sections present articles that span the full range of interest in the field of traumatic stress. It is one of the particular strengths—and challenges—of the field of traumatic stress studies that it draws interest from scientists and practitioners whose interest truly

range from “bench to bedside.” It was the intent of the 22nd Annual ISTSS meeting to bridge that gap to the extent possible, by showcasing state of the art work in areas of interest to both clinicians and to bench scientists. These articles highlight the work that was showcased at the meeting and provide a unique perspective on the disparate directions that together are moving our understanding of the consequences of traumatic stress forward.

The third section concerns a particularly important, and long-standing, controversy in the field of traumatic stress studies. The National Vietnam Veterans' Readjustment Study (NVVRS; Kulka et al., 1990) was a seminal publication in the field, reporting on the burden of posttraumatic stress among Vietnam veterans. The NVVRS helped to establish that there were substantial and long-term psychological consequences of trauma and combat. However, there has long been controversy about some of the findings documented in the NVVRS, particularly surrounding the prevalence estimates of psychopathology reported in this study. Recently, Dohrenwend and colleagues (2006) revisited the NVVRS in an article that was accompanied, in the same journal, by a commentary by McNally (2006). A symposium was convened at the ISTSS meeting to further discuss the findings and implications of the Dohrenwend reanalysis and McNally's commentary. Speakers at the symposium were Bruce P. Dohrenwend, William E. Schlenger, Terence M. Keane, Dean G. Kilpatrick, and Richard

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McNally. Dr. McNally could not be at the meeting in person and as such his presentation was made via DVD presented by Richard A. Bryant on his behalf. The articles in this special section by Dohrenwend and colleagues, Schlenger and colleagues, McNally, and Kilpatrick arise from this session and represent some of the spirited discussion about this issue at the symposium. I hope the reader finds these articles informative and interesting and can draw her or his own conclusions, or perhaps as importantly, raise her or his own questions about the issues at hand.

Unfortunately, nearly three decades after the recognition of posttraumatic stress disorder as a pathology in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM; American Psychological Association)*, there remains much we do not understand about the etiology, epidemiology, and treatment of the consequences of traumatic events. The articles in this special issue amply highlight the questions, and challenges, of central interest to the field. Fortu-

nately, as work in this special section of the *Journal* shows, there are practitioners and scientists who are dedicated to understanding, and mitigating, the consequences of traumatic events. That surely should be cause for optimism.

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