Media exposure and sympathetic nervous system reactivity predict PTSD symptoms in adolescents

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In a *Depression and Anxiety* study that surveyed youth following the terrorist attack at the 2013 Boston marathon, adolescents with lower levels of sympathetic reactivity (the flight or fight response) before the attack developed posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms only following high exposure to media coverage of the attack. Adolescents with high levels of sympathetic reactivity developed higher levels of PTSD symptoms regardless of how much media coverage they saw.

"This study tells us more about which children are most vulnerable to symptoms of PTSD and emphasizes the importance of limiting media exposure for all children and adolescents following life- threatening events such as acts of terrorism," said senior author Dr. Margaret Sheridan.

More information: Busso, D. S., McLaughlin, K. A. and Sheridan, M. A. (2014), MEDIA EXPOSURE AND SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM REACTIVITY PREDICT PTSD SYMPTOMS AFTER THE BOSTON MARATHON BOMBINGS. Depress. Anxiety, 31: 551–558. DOI: 10.1002/da.22282

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