

'Trauma pill' could help those with PTSD

January 30 2006

A "trauma pill" could blot out memories of harrowing events for combat veterans and survivors of accidents or terrorism, say Canadian researchers.

Most memories decay naturally, but people under extreme stress pump an abnormal amount of stress hormones during the event -- so the memories are stored differently, said Dr. Alain Brunet, professor of psychiatry at McGill University in Montreal.

"If you have (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) your memory is so fresh it's as if the event is happening now," he said. "For a person to have that vivid flashback certain hormones are released by the brain. If you can block these, the memory is weakened or even removed completely."

Brunet and colleagues had 20 people suffering from PTSD recall their experiences as vividly as possible in therapy sessions, after being given doses of propranolol -- a beta-blocker used to treat high blood pressure, angina and abnormal heart rhythms -- the Sunday Telegraph reported.

Preliminary findings indicate the PTSD sufferers experienced fewer flashbacks and less severe symptoms after taking the drug.

Copyright 2006 by United Press International

Citation: 'Trauma pill' could help those with PTSD (2006, January 30) retrieved 3 May 2024

from <https://phys.org/news/2006-01-trauma-pill-ptsd.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.