

# Intensive Care Diaries: Can They Really Reduce Post-ICU PTSD?

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## Abstract

Critical care consists of providing an intense and intricate level of medical care, to people who have life-threatening injuries and illnesses. Patients are often confronted with their own mortality while receiving these treatments. Some medical interventions can also leave patients unable to communicate or orient themselves to hospital staff and their surroundings. Therefore, patients are at high risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). There are current post intensive care unit (ICU), PTSD treatments available, however research shows that incorporating ICU diaries as an intervention can reduce PTSD rates after discharge.

## Background/Significance of the Problem

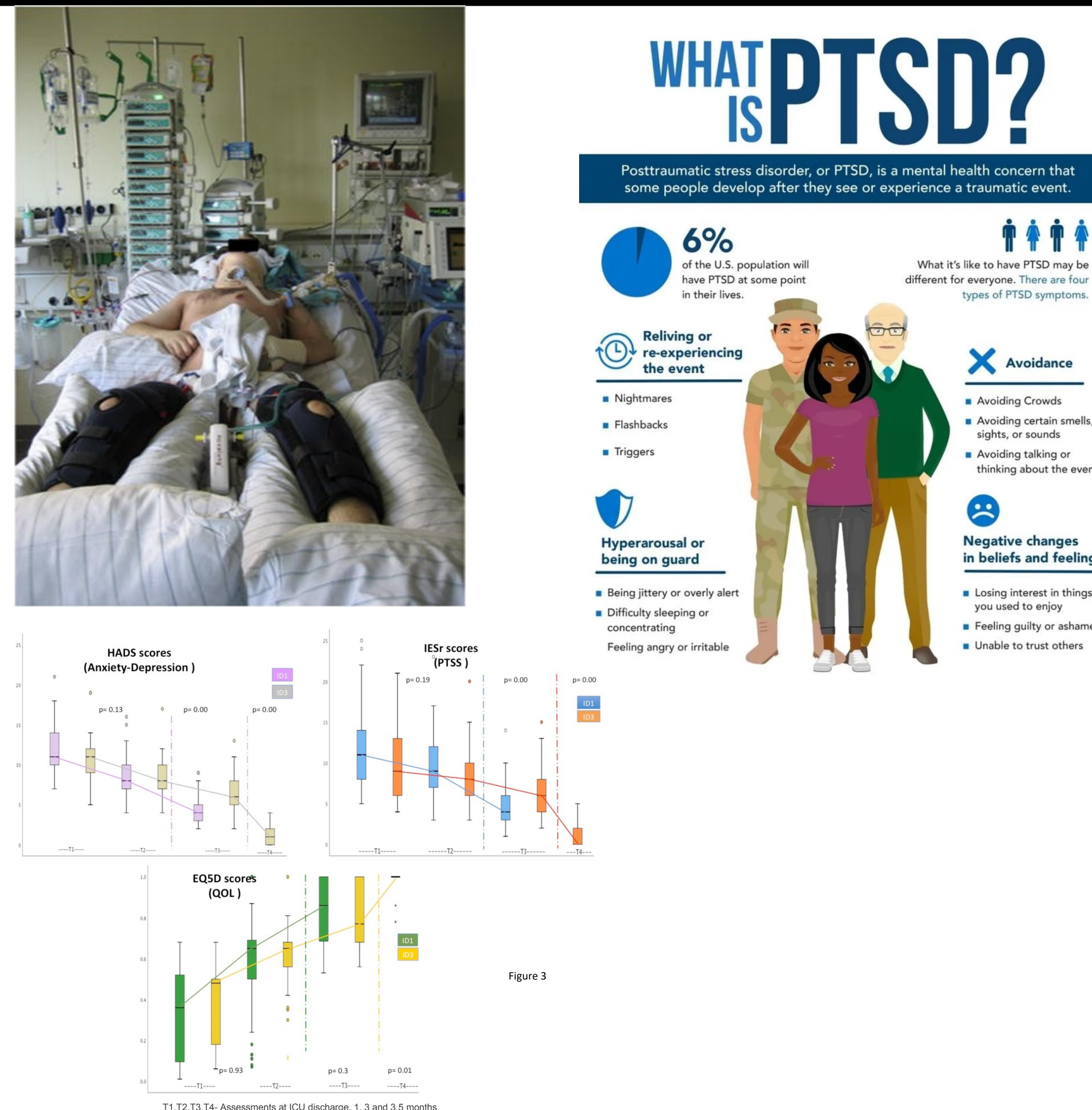
- Approximately 1 in 5 ICU survivors will experience PTSD symptoms after being discharged (Righy et al 2022).
- They include, anxiety, depression, flashbacks, nightmares, hyperarousal, and emotional numbing (Righy et al 2022).
- Cognitive therapy-as a first line treatment for ICU related PTSD is a recommended intervention by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence, (Abdelbaky & Eldelpshany 2024). However, rates are still increasing.

## Evidence Review Results

- RCTs reviewed showed statistical and clinical significance when it came to using ICU diaries as an intervention to reduce post ICU survivor PTSD rates.
- Intensive care unit diaries also suggest improvement in quality of life, reducing anxiety, and depression rates, as well as decreased instances of delusional memories after discharge.
- The timing of providing patients with their ICU diaries played a role in the instances of post ICU PTSD.

Rashidi et al 2024	This study aimed to determine if the use of ICU diaries influenced the prevalence of PTSD in ICU survivors in Iran.
Sayde et al 2020	This study aimed to determine if ICU diaries decrease the instances of PTSD, depression, anxiety, and other important components of Post-Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS) after discharge from the ICU.
Sun et al 2021	This systematic review evaluates the effectiveness of ICU diaries on the incidence of PTSD, anxiety, and depression after ICU discharge.
Swagata et al 2022	The purpose of this study was to determine the optimal time to deliver ICU diaries and the impact they have on mental health, anxiety-depression, PTSD, QoL, and memories after being discharged from the ICU.
Torres et al 2020	This study aimed to determine the effects of nurse-initiated diary intervention on the occurrence of PTSD development in ICU survivors.

## Figures



## Implications for Nursing Practice

- Intensive care unit diaries increase patient safety
- The implementation of ICU diaries increases interprofessional collaboration, communication, and care.
- Interprofessional collaboration embraces more comprehensive and well-coordinated care resulting in more accurate diagnoses and treatment plans for patients.
- Staff that participated in a specific study reported the diaries increased family engagement, enhanced communication, created a greater sense of caring, and supports being a coping mechanism for patients and their families (Drumright et al 2021).

## CNL Role

- Clinical Nurse Leaders (CNL):
- Provide leadership for continuity of care and lateral integration.
- Train nursing staff responsible for the patients' care throughout their hospital stay.
- Introduce evidence-based research to practice models to support ICU diaries studies.
- Communicate and collaborate with other hospital systems, nationwide and international, that utilize ICU diaries to learn their practices for ICU diary implementation.
- The CNL can further research, synthesize, and develop necessary materials to help with the introduction and ongoing practice of ICU diaries.

## Future Directions

- Promote further research surrounding benefits of ICU diaries to assist in reducing PTSD rates.
- Synthesize and develop endeavors necessary materials to help with the introduction and ongoing practice with ICU diaries
- With new research endeavors incentivize for participation in these studies
- Reach out to providers at Level 1 trauma centers and Principal Investigators at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) toward collaborative studies for ICU diaries
- Educate practitioners, and the interprofessional teams on the benefits of ICU diaries improving patient outcomes with potential reductions anxiety, depression, and quality of life as demonstrated in PTSD symptoms.

## References



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