

The nature of PTSD: Past Present and Future perspectives

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This presentation reviews the history of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the variety of its clinical manifestations, the trajectory of this disorder(s) throughout human lifespan, and the treatment modalities that have been developed to date.

Though PTSD is regarded as a modern-age affliction, ancient texts reveal that it is as old as humanity itself. In the 20th century, with the advancement of the sciences of psychology and neurobiology, the concepts of trauma and its sequelae have undergone repeated re-conceptualizations, with both psychological and biological mechanisms implicated in its origin. However, despite impressive strides in the scientific exploration of this disorder, there is still no effective solution for this debilitating condition. PTSD has proven to be rather resistant to existing pharmacological treatment. Likewise, psychological interventions have met, at best, with limited success.

Yet, the accumulated recent findings of PTSD-related neurobiological research have laid down the theoretical groundwork for several innovative approaches. The HBOT-PTSD study, presented in this conference, is one of these potential intervention modalities, unique in its presumed mechanism of structural rehabilitation of brain tissues damaged by former trauma.