

The Effects of the Transcendental Meditation technique on PTSD

- **Effects on war veterans and war refugees**
- **Effects on the 20 PTSD symptoms**

Characteristics of the Six TM Studies on PTSD

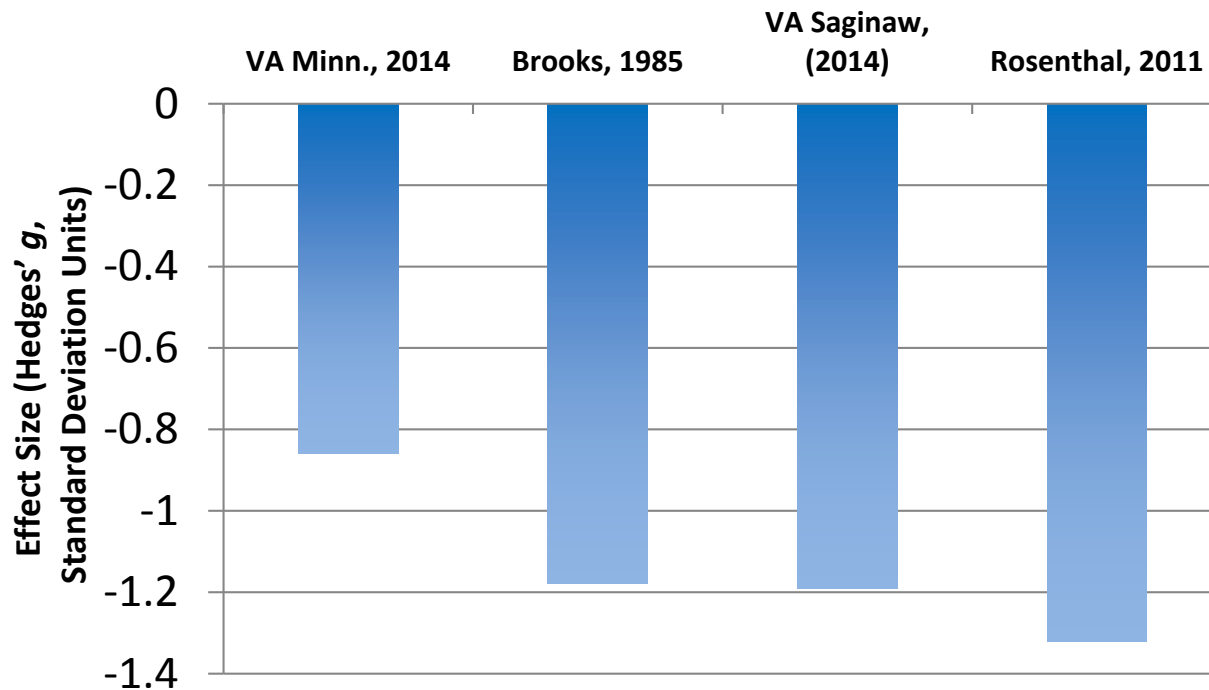
Study ID	Population	PTSD measure	Age (yrs)	N Total	% Males	Duration (wk)	Study design
Brooks, 1985	Combat Vets	DSM III Criteria	25	18	100	12	CT
Rosenthal, 2011	Combat Vets	PCL-M	18-65	5	100	12	PP
VA Minneapolis, 2014	Combat Vets	PCL-M	61.5	17	94	8	PP
VA Saginaw, 2014	Combat Vets	PCL-M	54.4	19	74	8	RCT
Rees, 2013	Congo War Refugees	PCL-C	32.8	21	65	19	RCT
Reese, 2014	Congo War Refugees	PCL-C	33.2	11	73	4	PP

CT = Controlled Trail, PP = Pretest-Posttest, RCT= Randomized Controlled Trial.
 DSM III = Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, third edition.
 PCL-M = PTSD Checklist, Military. PCL-C = PTSD Checklist, Civilian.

The chart below shows that TM consistently had large effects on reducing PTSD symptoms on global tests of PTSD.

Reduced Symptoms of PTSD in War Veterans

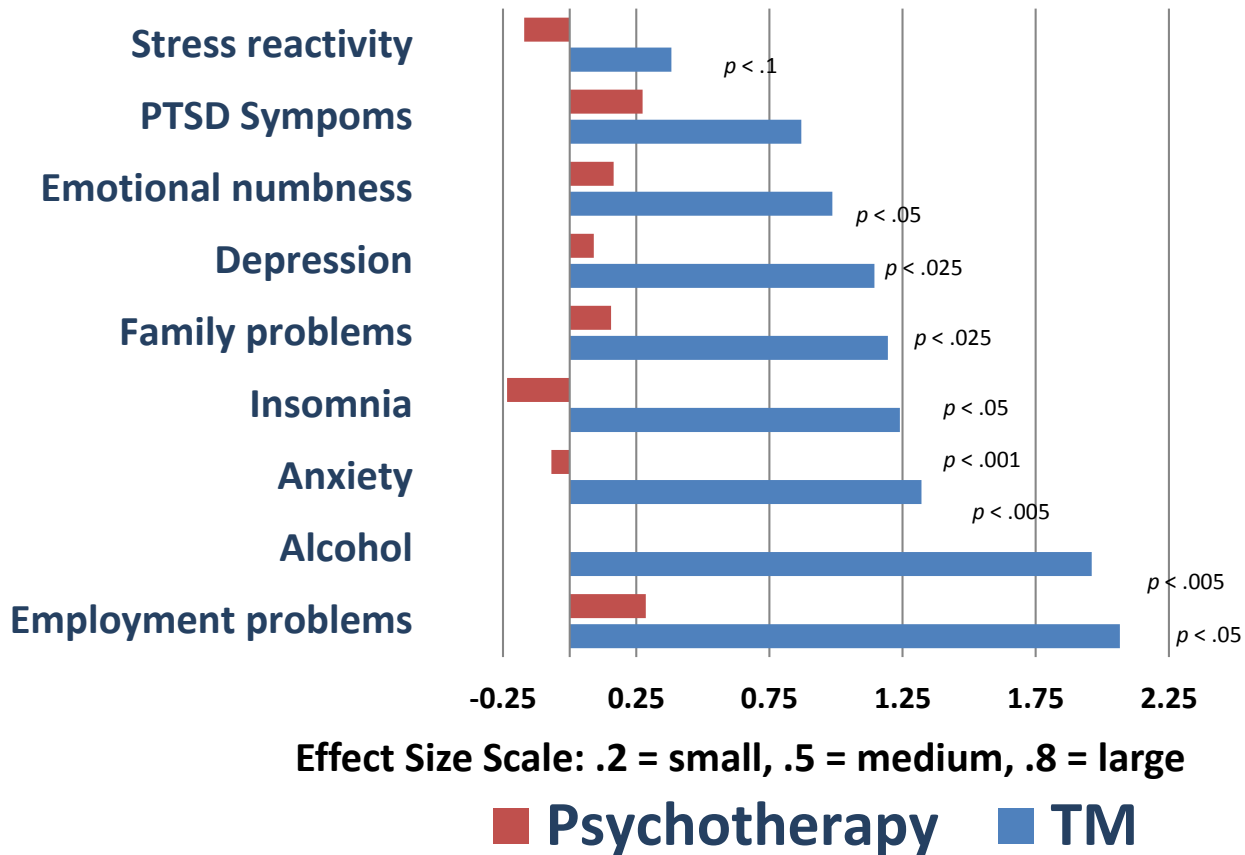
Through the Transcendental Meditation technique



Interpretation of effect sizes: .2 = small effect, .4 = medium effect, .8 or more = large effect

References. Brooks, 1985. *Journal of Counseling and Development* 64: 212-15. Rosenthal, 2011. *Military Medicine* 176, no. 6 : VA Studies: *Meditation for PTSD demonstration project: Final report to Mental Health Services, Department of Veteran Affairs*. Rochester, New York: Department of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester;2014

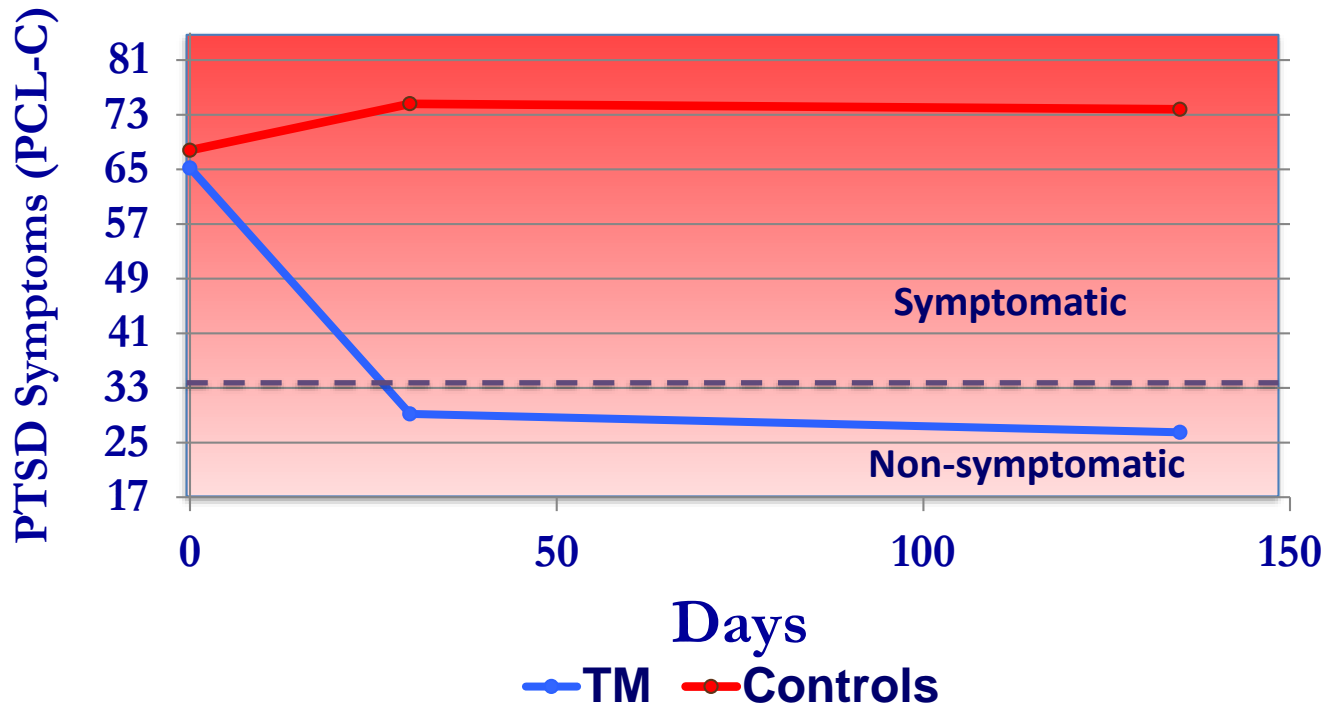
Decreased PTSD Symptoms in War Veterans Through the Transcendental Meditation Program



Brooks JS, Scarano T. Transcendental Meditation and the treatment of post-Vietnam adjustment. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 1985;64:212-5.

Decreased PTSD Symptoms in Congolese War Refugees

through the *Transcendental Meditation* Technique



The TM technique reduced PTSD symptoms in war refugees.

Reference. *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 26, 1-14 (2013)

This study on Congolese refugees published in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* found that after 30 days of TM practice their PTSD symptoms decreased to a non-symptomatic level (a score of 34 or less) in contrast to control subjects whose symptoms increased (85 is the maximum score on the scale). After 135 days, the TM group's symptoms continued to decrease, compared to non-meditating control subjects whose levels of PTSD rose and stayed at very high levels. Compliance with TM practice was good; most of the refugees reported meditating regularly. (Rees et al. 2013)

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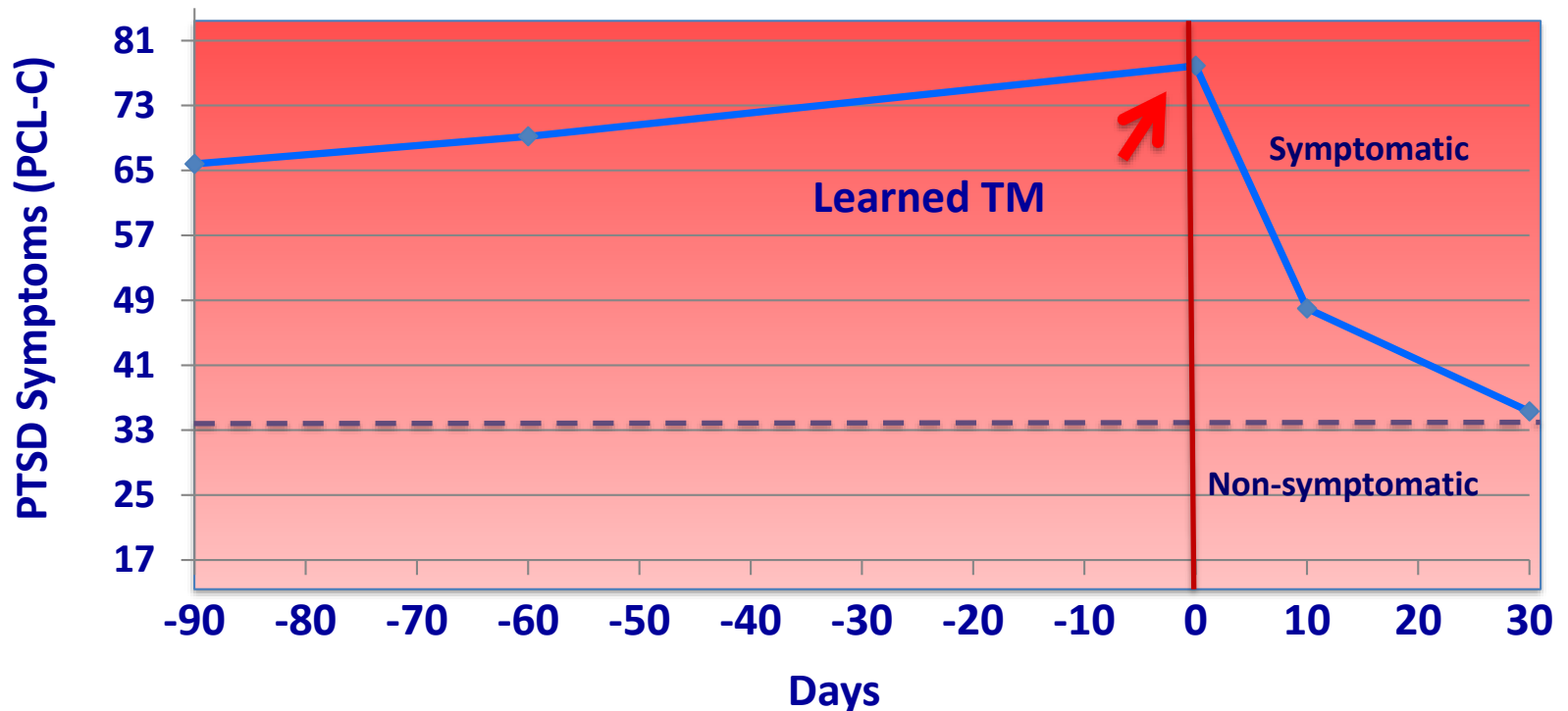
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Rees, B., F. Travis, D. Shapiro, and R. Chant. "Reduction in Post Traumatic Stress Symptoms in Congolese Refugees Practicing Transcendental Meditation." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 26 (2013): 295-98.

The study was a matched controlled single blind brief report that used the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist, Civilian version (PCL-C) scale. The scale has a range of 17-85, and a score of 34 or less is considered non-symptomatic.

Rapid Reduction in PTSD Symptoms in Congolese War Refugees through the *Transcendental Meditation* Technique



TM reduces PTSD symptoms within 10 days, and after 30 days they decline to non-symptomatic levels.

Reference. *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 27, no. 1 (2014): 112-115.

A second study found that the refugees' PTSD symptoms decreased rapidly within the first 10 days of TM practice, and after 30 days they practically reached non-symptomatic levels. ([Rees et al. 2014](#))

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Rees, B., F. Travis, D. Shapiro, and R. Chant. "Significant Reductions in Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms in Congolese Refugees after 10 Days Transcendental Meditation Practice." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 27, no. 1 (2014): 112-15.

Case Study of PTSD. A case study published in *Military Medicine* of active duty U.S. Army Service Members previously diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) found that TM made them feel calmer, less stressed, less irritable, more patient, less sad, more cheerful, more peppy, and better able to get work done. ([Barnes, Rigg, and Williams 2013](#))

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Barnes, V. A. , J. L. Rigg, and J. J. Williams. "A Clinical Case Series: Treatment of Ptsd with Transcendental Meditation in Active Duty Military Personnel." *Military Medicine* 178 (2013): e836-40.

DSM-5 Criteria for PTSD

1. Repeated, disturbing, and unwanted memories of the stressful experience?

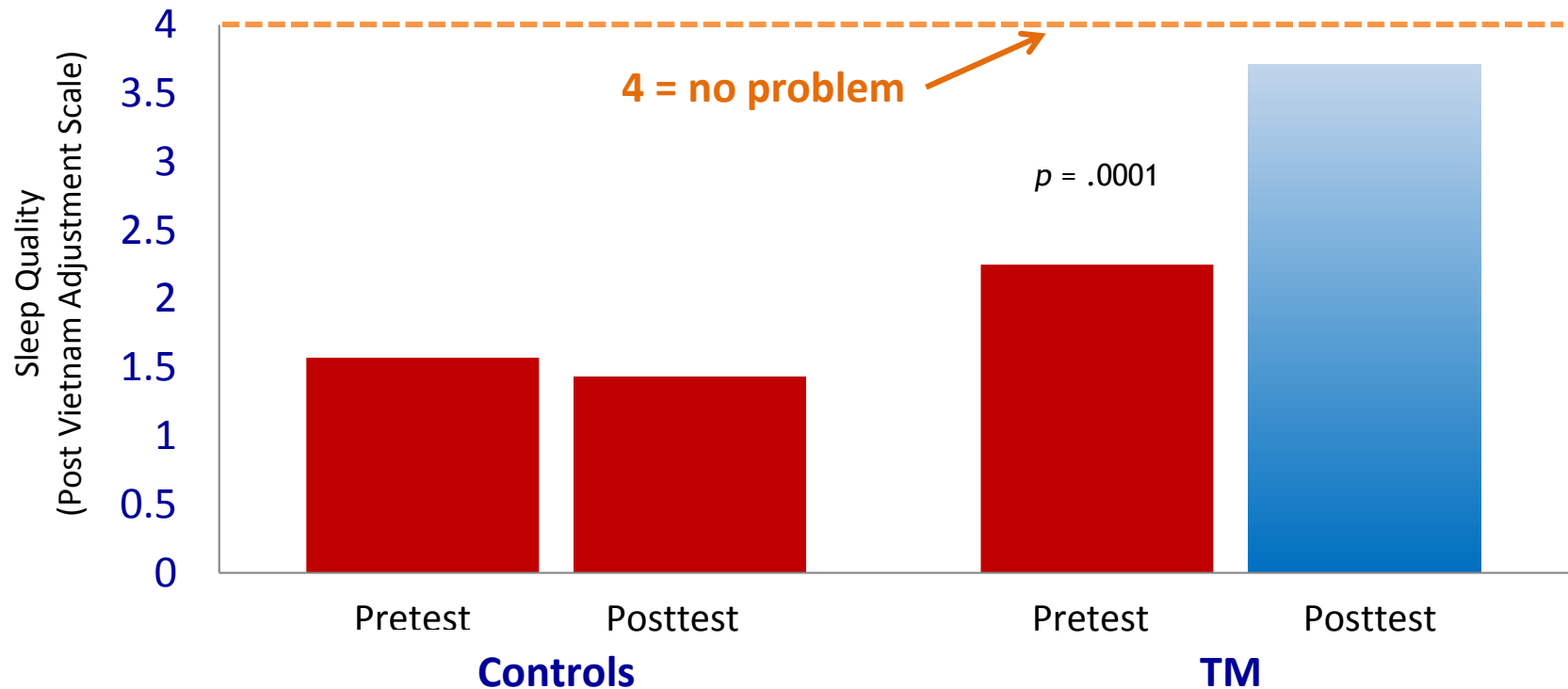
Research on TM shows

- Increased Freedom from Habitual Patterns of Perception
- Increased autonomic stability and decreased obsessive thoughts and behavior
- Increased emotional strength and lessening of unwelcome thoughts

DSM-5 Criteria for PTSD

2. Repeated, disturbing dreams of the stressful experience?

Improved Sleep Quality in Vets with PTSD



Abrams A, Siegel L. The Transcendental Meditation program and rehabilitation at Folsom State Prison: A cross-validation study. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*. 1978;5:3-20.

Notes.

This 3- month study was performed at Folsom maximum security prison on 115 inmates, half were assigned to TM and half to a wait-list control, who learned TM 3 months later. The results were reductions in anxiety, neuroticism , hostility, and insomnia in the TM group. The meditating inmates committed fewer behavioral infractions than the controls.

DSM-5 Criteria for PTSD

3. Suddenly feeling or acting as if the stressful experience were actually happening again?

Research on TM shows

- Increased emotional stability and decreased tension
- Decreased over sensitivity
- Increased ability to live more fully in the present; ability to connect past and present meaningfully (a meta-analysis self actualization)

DSM-5 Criteria for PTSD

4. Feeling very upset when something reminded you of the stressful experience?

Research on TM shows

- Increased emotional stability and decreased tension
- Decreased over sensitivity
- Increased ability to live more fully in the present; ability to connect past and present meaningfully (a meta-analysis self actualization)

DSM-5 Criteria for PTSD

5. Having strong physical reactions when something reminded you of the stressful experience (for example, heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating)?

Research on TM shows

- Improved stress reactivity : faster habituation of skin resistance response to stressful stimuli; fewer multiple responses; fewer spontaneous skin resistance responses
- More relaxed style of physiological function: Reduced cortisol levels, higher basal skin resistance; lower respiration rate; lower plasma lactate.

DSM-5 Criteria for PTSD

6. Avoiding memories, thoughts, or feelings related to the stressful experience?

Research on TM shows

- Reduced psychological distress, anxiety, and depression; improved coping ability
- Decreased anxiety (anxiety meta-analysis)
- Improved feeling reactivity—improved responsiveness to one's own needs and feelings (self-actualization meta-analysis)

DSM-5 Criteria for PTSD

7. Avoiding external reminders of the stressful experience (for example, people, places, conversations, activities, objects, or situations)?

Research on TM shows

- Cognitive orientation towards positive values
- Selective attention oriented towards positive values together with reduced anxiety
- Increased Field Independence: Less Influenced by External Cues, Stimuli, or Reminders

DSM-5 Criteria for PTSD

8. Trouble remembering important parts of the stressful experience?

Research on TM shows

- Decreased cognitive distortion and improvement in intelligence-related measures
- Improved spontaneous organization of memory; improved stabilization of organized memory; improved problem-solving ability
- Increased ability to connect past and present meaningfully

DSM-5 Criteria for PTSD

9. Having strong negative beliefs about yourself, other people, or the world?

Research on TM shows

- Increased Self-Actualization: Enhanced Self-Regard; Increased Inner-Directedness (Independence, Self-Supportiveness); Increased Spontaneity
- Increased integrative perspective on self and world; Increased resilient sense of self