



Importance of an early EMDR intervention in emergency room to prevent post-traumatic stress disorder and concussion-like persistent symptoms : a pilot randomized controlled study

Background : Up to 20% (1) of patients presenting at an Emergency Room (ER) after a stressful event will suffer durably of various very diverse long-lasting symptoms (headaches, memory problems, concentration problems, personality changes, irritability, etc.), with a potentially significant decline in quality of life. This symptoms can be grouped under the term Post-Concussion-Like Symptoms (PCLS) (5). This procession of symptoms, initially described in traumatized brain, is also found in patients with all types of trauma (2, 3, 4). The results of a recent study of injured patients suggest that there is a strong correlation between symptoms of PCLS and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and that stress plays a major role (5).).

Objectives : Assess the feasibility of EMDR in ER and compare the effectiveness of an early single EMDR intervention after stressful event, to reassurance or usual care.

Method: This monocentric randomized controlled open-label study was conducted in the ER of Bordeaux University Hospital. It included patients with a high risk for PCLS or PTSD randomized in three groups: a reassurance session, a session of EMDR, and usual care.

Results: At 3-month recall, the rate of patients with PTSD was 3% in the EMDR group versus 16% and 19% in the reassurance and control groups. The PCLS rate was 15% in the EMDR group versus 47% and 65% in the reassurance and control groups.

Conclusion: This is the first randomized, controlled trial that shows that a single short EMDR intervention is both feasible and effective to prevent ESPT and PCLS

The study was registered at [ClinicalTrials.gov](https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/study/NCT03194386) (NCT03194386).

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