

# NET Studie



## Study on the efficacy of moderate aerobic endurance training as an adjunct to trauma-focused psychotherapy in traumatized refugees and asylum seekers at Saarland University

International review articles and meta-analysis show, that on average 35 - 40% of asylum seekers and refugees in Germany suffer from PTSD and 21.7% from depression. PTSD and major depression often co-occur. High prevalences are not surprising, since most refugees incur multiple traumatic experiences before or during their refuge. The necessity of an adequate psychotherapeutic treatment for refugees and asylum seekers seems even more relevant. Unfortunately the health care for refugees and asylum seekers with psychological disease in Saarland is underdeveloped and includes much paperwork.

A study of the Department of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy (Uni.-Prof. Tanja Michael/Prof. (apl.) Dr. Monika Equit) in cooperation with the Institute for Sports and preventive Medicine (Uni. -Prof. Tim Meyer) of the Saarland University and funded by German Research Foundation (DFG; Project number: 426361032) aims to improve the lack in psychotherapeutic care for refugees and asylum seekers.

The study investigates the effect of moderate aerobic endurance training as an adjunct to Narrative Exposure Therapy for the simultaneous treatment of PTSD and depression symptomatology in traumatized refugees and asylum seekers.

The Narrative Exposure Therapy is an established type of trauma-focused psychotherapy, which is common as gold standard for treating PTSD. Narrative exposure therapy is characterized by integrating traumatic life events into the patient's life story (patient's narrative) through exposition in sensu.

Endurance training has been proven to be effective in treating depressive symptoms.

First the participating patients fill out screening questionnaires on PTSD and depressive symptoms. The psychological screening is followed by psychological and medical diagnostics. All patients receive Narrative Exposure Therapy. Half of the patients also take part in moderate endurance training. The patients who also participate in moderate endurance training are randomly allocated to training group.

The Narrative Exposure Therapy (10 x 100min; one session weekly) is conducted by licensed psychotherapists of the Center for Behavior Therapy at Saarland University or psychotherapists in initial training. The adjuvant moderate endurance training is guided and in charge of sports medicine specialists.

Language mediators are available if needed.

To participate in the study the following inclusion criteria should be fulfilled:

#### Inclusion Criteria

- Health Insurance
- Minimum age of 16 years
- Diagnosis of PTSD
- Clinically relevant Depression symptoms

The exclusion criteria listed below preclude participation in the study:

#### Exclusion Criteria

- Extensive experience of endurance training (i.e., more than one weekly unit of endurance sports during the last two years and competitive practice in endurance sports).
- cardiovascular diseases that preclude participation in moderate endurance training
- eating disease
- acute psychosis
- substance abuse disorders/ drug and alcohol abuse
- current pregnancy
- use of benzodiazepines

#### **Brief description**

<b>Start of Study</b>	<b>April 2020</b>
<b>Extend of Treatment</b>	<b>10 Weeks</b>
<i>Narrative Exposure Therapy</i>	<b>1x per week 100 min</b>
<i>Endurance training (group/individual)</i>	<b>3x per week 45 min</b>
<b>Treatment location</b>	Center for Behavior Therapy at Saarland University <b>Building A1.3 on the Campus of the UdS</b>

#### Project coordination

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