

Assessment of Insomnia and Nightmares After Exposure to Psychological Trauma in Jordan

Roua Aldala'een, MSc*, Abdallah Y Naser, Ph.D*

ABSTRACT

Psychological trauma is a condition that affects an individual after exposure to an intensely distressing experience. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is characterized by persistent, strong reactions to reminders of a traumatic episode, mood disturbances, a sense of imminent danger, insomnia, and hypervigilance. The prevalence of chronic insomnia among adults ranges from 0% to 15%, while around 25% to 35% have transient or irregular insomnia. This cross-sectional study used an online survey to evaluate insomnia and nightmares after exposure to psychological trauma in Jordan. We employed the International Trauma Questionnaire, a self-reported measure of PTSD and complex PTSD. The study was conducted from early February 2025 until late June 2025. The study included 884 females. The most reported trauma among participants was the death or loss of a loved one (35.3%), followed by sexual assault (9.3%) and illness or injury (9.3%). About 37.6% had experienced trauma for less than a year, while 26.1% reported trauma for 1–3 years. Only a small proportion (5.3%) sought psychological treatment for insomnia, with most rating the support poorly (57.7% gave a score of 0 out of 5). However, most participants (61.8%) reported improvement after two weeks of using psychiatric medications. Around 11.7% had been diagnosed with insomnia prior to their trauma. A notable portion reported experiencing upsetting dreams (27.7%) and intrusive memories (31.1%) frequently. Avoidance of internal (31.6%) and external (27.4%) reminders was also common. Symptoms of hyperarousal were prevalent, including being overly alert (28.2%) and easily startled (33.4%). These symptoms significantly affected daily functioning, with 269 (34.1%) reporting social impacts and 207 (26.3%) noting impairment at work. The most frequently reported traumas among participants were the death or loss of a loved one, sexual assault, and illness or injury. Few participants sought psychological treatment for insomnia, and most rated the treatment as ineffective. While most participants reported improvement after two weeks of using psychiatric medications, many discontinued treatments due to high costs and side effects. Many had been diagnosed with insomnia prior to their trauma. A notable proportion of participants reported experiencing upsetting dreams and intrusive memories frequently. Symptoms of hyperarousal were common, including feeling overly alert and easily startled. Feelings of detachment from others were also strongly associated with PTSD.

Keywords: Insomnia; Nightmares; Psychological; Trauma; Jordan

Bahrain Med Bull 2026; 48 (1): 2864-2869

* Department of Applied Pharmaceutical Sciences and Clinical Pharmacy
Faculty of Pharmacy, Isra University, Amman, Jordan.
Email: ruaaawni1993@hotmail.com