Chronic posttraumatic stress and its predictors in patients living with an implantable cardioverter defibrillator.

Abstract:
Patients with an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) show clinically relevant depression and anxiety, but little is known about their levels of posttraumatic stress. We assessed chronic posttraumatic stress attributable to a traumatic cardiac event and its predictors in patients at two time points after ICD placement. We investigated 107 consecutively enrolled patients (57±14 years, 62% men) on average 24±21 months after ICD placement (baseline) and again 41±18 months later (follow-up). All patients completed the Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R) to self-rate the severity of posttraumatic stress (range 0-110). The 30% of patients with the highest IES-R scores (>=25) at baseline were defined as PTSD cases; the same threshold was applied to define PTSD caseness at follow-up. Posttraumatic stress increased from baseline to follow-up (19±22 vs. 25±19, p=5 shocks during follow-up all predicted greater posttraumatic stress at follow-up (p-values<=0.029). Female gender, helplessness, and depression predicted PTSD at baseline (p-values<=0.022); low education and posttraumatic stress at baseline predicted PTSD at follow-up (p-values<=0.003). Between 2 and 5.5 years post-ICD placement chronic posttraumatic stress slightly increased and nearly one-fifth of patients had newly developed PTSD. The identified psychological predictors of long-term chronicity of posttraumatic stress.
might particularly inform behavioral interventions for ICD recipients.