State Institution Kundiiev Institute of Occupational Health
of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine

CLINICAL VARIABILITY OF STRESS-ASSOCIATED SYMPTOMS IN COMBATANTS WITH PERIPHERAL NERVOUS SYSTEM DISEASES IN THE POST-ACUTE REHABILITATION PERIOD

JUSTIFICATION FOR INDIVIDUALIZED REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

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BACKGROUND

War is among the most **powerful and dangerous social stressors** in Ukraine's modern history.

MARKED INCREASE

- stress-related disorders in both the general population and specific subgroups
- growing burden in combatants during rehabilitation

CLINICAL COMPLEXITY

- considerable symptom polymorphism
- variable pathodynamics
- overlap of somatic and psychological manifestations

CURRENT LIMITATION

Despite intensive research in recent decades, the **effectiveness** of corrective interventions **remains limited.**

AIM

This study aimed to identify the **clinical and psychopathological features of stress-associated symptoms** in combatants with peripheral nervous system diseases during the post-acute rehabilitation period and to determine **targets for individualized rehabilitation.**

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study site: Clinic of Occupational Diseases and Comprehensive Rehabilitation, SI Kundiiev Institute of Occupational Health, NAMS of Ukraine

Participants: 72 combatants with peripheral nervous system diseases

Design: assessment at the beginning and end of the standard rehabilitation program

Methods:

- clinical psychiatric interview
- psychometric assessment

PSYCHOMETRIC TOOLS

PCL-5
PTSD symptoms

PHQ-9
depressive symptoms

GAD-7
anxiety symptoms

SSS-8
somatic symptom burden

72
combatants with peripheral nervous system diseases

→ **Baseline assessment** (clinical interview + psychometric scales)

→ **Standard rehabilitation program**

→ **Final assessment** (clinical interview + psychometric scales)

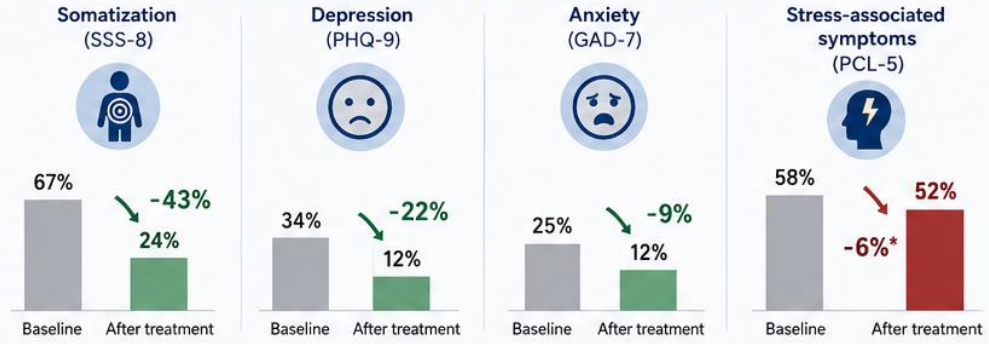
RESULTS

In the post-acute rehabilitation period, the majority of combatants exhibited a high prevalence of **somatized (67%)** and **stress-associated (58%)** psychopathological symptoms. By contrast, classical **depressive (34%)** and **anxiety (25%)** symptoms were observed significantly less frequently ($p<0.05$).

Following comprehensive treatment in accordance with the standard rehabilitation protocol, improvement was documented in overall somatic condition as well as in psychometric indicators: **reduction of somatization by 43%, depression by 22%,** and **anxiety by 9%**.

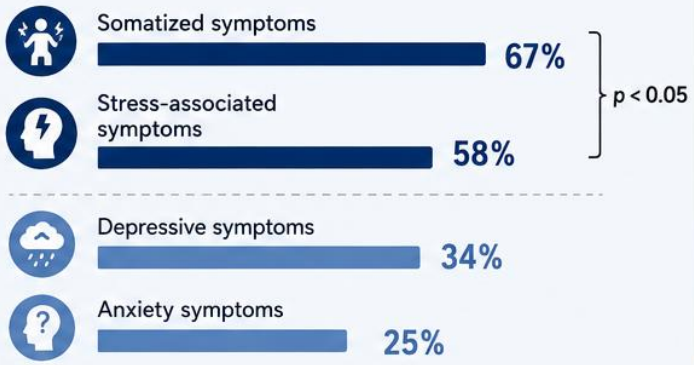
Nevertheless, the prevalence of **pathological stress responses** remained high, reaching **52%** of the examined cohort, which substantially limits the effectiveness of standard rehabilitation approaches.

CHANGES AFTER STANDARD REHABILITATION PROGRAM



Note: values represent prevalence (% of examined cohort). *Non-significant change.

PREVALENCE OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS (POST-ACUTE PERIOD)



KEY TAKEAWAY

The high prevalence of pathological stress responses **(52%)** substantially limits the effectiveness of standard rehabilitation approaches.

RECOMMENDATION

- Move beyond uniform treatment strategies and implement **personalized rehabilitation programs.**
- Integrate not only neurological and somatic rehabilitation but also **targeted psychological interventions.**
- Adjust interventions for **individual psychotraumatic experiences, stress-response typology,** and **personality characteristics.**

The results underscore the need to move beyond uniform treatment strategies and to implement **personalized rehabilitation programs** for combatants with **peripheral nervous system pathology**. Such programs should integrate not only neurological and somatic rehabilitation but also targeted psychological interventions, adjusted for individual psychotraumatic experiences, stress-response typology, and personality characteristics.

CONCLUSION

The study provides **clinical justification** for the development of **individualized rehabilitation protocols**, which may enhance treatment **effectiveness**, **support recovery**, and improve the **long-term quality of life** of combatants affected by **war-related stressors**.

Individualized rehabilitation protocols based on clinical and psychopathological assessment

Enhanced treatment effectiveness through targeted interventions

Support recovery of physical, psychological, and social functioning

Improved long-term quality of life for combatants affected by war-related stressors