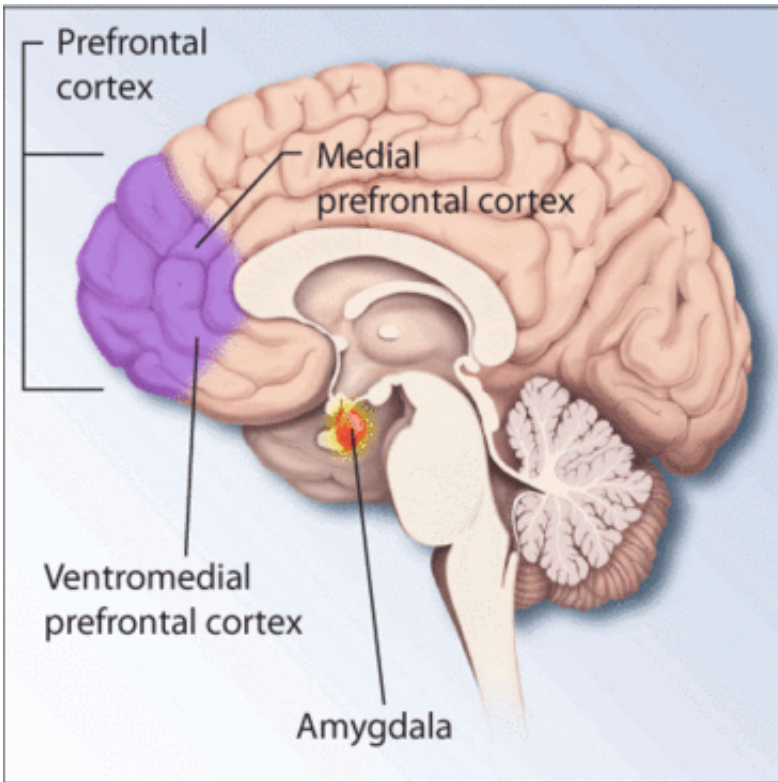


# PTSD linked with increased lupus risk

September 20 2017

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Regions of the brain associated with stress and posttraumatic stress disorder.  
Credit: National Institutes of Health

In a study published in *Arthritis & Rheumatology*, trauma exposure and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in civilian women were strongly associated with increased risk of developing lupus, an autoimmune disease.

In the study of 54,763 women, investigators found a nearly three-fold

elevated risk of lupus among women with probable PTSD and more than two-fold higher risk of lupus among women who had experienced any traumatic event compared with women not exposed to trauma.

The findings contribute to growing evidence that psychosocial trauma and associated stress responses may lead to autoimmune disease.

"We were surprised that exposure to trauma was so strongly associated with risk of lupus—trauma was a stronger predictor of developing [lupus](#) than smoking," said Dr. Andrea Roberts, lead author of the study. Our results add to considerable scientific evidence that our mental health substantially affects our physical health, making access to [mental health care](#) even more urgent."

Lupus Awareness Month takes place during October in the UK every year.

**More information:** *Arthritis & Rheumatology*, [DOI: 10.1002/art.40222](https://doi.org/10.1002/art.40222)

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