

Summary:

This study describes Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART), a relatively new and promising brief exposure-based psychotherapy, and its application to the management of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as reflected in a set of case reports. Also provided is an overview of recent research on ART and PTSD.

Methods:

After reviewing the scientific literature published to date, we present various case studies and analyze how ART was applied to patients (both military personnel and civilians) who were diagnosed with PTSD and then treated with ART at the Gomez Ulla Military Hospital (Role 4 medical facility) in Madrid, Spain.

Results:

ART is an emerging brief trauma-focused psychotherapy, which is derived from Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), though with a tighter protocol. ART uses image exposure and imagery rescripting, which is facilitated through sets of eye movements. ART is administered in two to five sessions though symptoms usually improve after the first session. All of the patients treated with ART at our medical facility showed considerable and rapid improvement in most of their PTSD symptoms. The majority of the papers published on PTSD were case reports, except for four studies, one of which was a randomized control trial. These four studies showed a treatment response with a clinically significant change (defined as a reduction of the posttraumatic checklist (PCL) of more than 10 points) in the majority of patients.

Conclusions:

ART is a promising brief trauma-focused therapy (two to five sessions), with no requirement for narration, homework, preparation, or rapport. The fact that it is protocolized makes it highly portable. As reflected in the case reports, ART provided frequent and lasting clinical relief of PTSD symptoms (from the first session on). However, more peer-reviewed studies will be needed in the future to fully understand and confirm the potential reach of ART.