

Type V — Somatic-Sensitization, Pain-Dominant PTSD

ABSURD HEALTH INSTITUTE | 15 OCTOBER 2026 | V. Six-phenotype PTSD hypothesis

Abstract

This concept paper examines type v — somatic-sensitization, pain-dominant PTSD. It develops an argument drawn from SIX PTSDs, identifies the relevant biological or clinical mechanisms, and considers where that argument may fail. This is a narrative perspective, not a systematic review or an original clinical study.

The central problem

Trauma can coexist with persistent pain, gastrointestinal symptoms, headaches and heightened attention to bodily sensations. The source book proposes a somatic-sensitization phenotype that gives such presentations explicit status rather than treating physical symptoms as incidental. Its central question is whether changes in pain processing and interoception sometimes constitute a dominant maintenance pathway in post-traumatic illness.

Mechanisms and causal architecture

Pain is produced by peripheral inputs, central processing, prior learning, inflammation and context. Threat-associated vigilance may increase attention to innocuous sensations; ongoing pain disrupts sleep and elevates threat appraisal; avoidance and deconditioning can exacerbate disability. This does not imply that the pain is imaginary. Structural disease, neuropathy, inflammation and visceral pathology may be present simultaneously. Interoceptive amplification is only one possible mechanism and should not become an explanatory shortcut when diagnostic work is incomplete.

A discriminating example

A person with trauma and severe abdominal pain needs appropriate gastrointestinal evaluation even when symptom attention and stress appear important. The presence of central sensitization never establishes the absence of organic disease. A responsible somatic-trauma paper shows how layered explanations can coexist without demoting a patient's physical complaint to a mere emotional expression.

Competing explanations and limitations

The greatest hazard is diagnostic overshadowing: attributing new chest pain, neurological deficits, GI bleeding or disabling symptoms to trauma without appropriate medical evaluation. A history of abuse does not make a person less likely to have ordinary medical disease. Nor can central sensitization be inferred from pain intensity alone. Psychological mechanisms and structural pathology often overlap.

What evidence would change the interpretation?

A discriminating analysis would use validated pain interference, sensory testing, interoceptive measures and longitudinal functional outcomes to see whether a reproducible pattern predicts response to specific integrated care. If the phenotype does not add beyond pain severity and comorbid diagnoses, the extra label may be unnecessary.

Implications for medical interpretation

The conceptual contribution is to treat pain and trauma together without confusing the absence of an obvious lesion with the absence of genuine suffering or cause.

Selected scientific reading

McEwen (1998), Protective and damaging effects of stress mediators, *New England Journal of Medicine*.
<https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJM199801153380307>

Lanius et al. (2010), Emotion modulation in PTSD: evidence for a dissociative subtype, *American Journal of Psychiatry*.
<https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2009.09081168>

Campbell et al. (2020), Identifying PTSD symptom typologies: a latent class analysis, *Psychiatry Research*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.112779>

Original source: SIX PTSDs. All source books supplied by the author.

Conceptual research commentary. Not a peer-reviewed clinical study, original trial, systematic review, validated diagnostic instrument or treatment protocol. Consult qualified care for medical decisions.