

## #ANTIVIRAL

### Can Hepatitis C Drugs Fight PTSD

A new study among US veterans finds that certain direct-acting antivirals used to treat Hepatitis C virus infection may also improve symptoms of PTSD.



More than 6% of Americans will develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in their lifetime. This potentially chronic condition disrupts lives and can lead to or exacerbate existing health issues such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders and suicidal thoughts.

Despite the high prevalence of PTSD, the US Food and Drug Administration has only approved two medications to treat this condition - sertraline and paroxetine - and both have shown only limited effectiveness in reducing PTSD symptoms.

PTSD is also common among military veterans; more than 10% of US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) patients experience these symptoms. Two years ago, researchers at the Boston University School of Public Health and the White River Junction Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Vermont began to investigate whether existing medications may improve PTSD symptoms, with funding from the National Institute of Mental Health.

During an initial exploratory analysis among a national cohort of VA patients, the researchers unexpectedly found that several new direct acting antiviral (DAA) medications used to treat Hepatitis C virus infection were associated with PTSD symptom improvement.

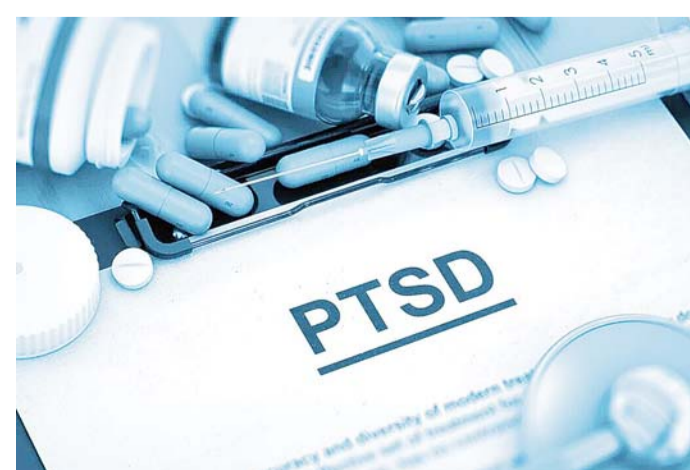
The findings appear in the journal *Biological Psychiatry*. Now, in a new follow-up study in the American Journal of Epidemiology, the researchers have conducted a more rigorous analysis to examine and compare the effectiveness of the previously identified DAAs in PTSD symptom improvement.

Their new analysis suggests the most promising DAA for prospective study as a potential medication for PTSD in patients without Hepatitis C virus infection.

The researchers found that the medication combination glecaprevir and pibrentasvir had the strongest association with PTSD symptom improvement among the DAAs most prescribed in the VA.

"Many people have PTSD, but there are few effective pharmacologic treatments and limited drug development for PTSD," says co-principal investigator and senior author Jaime Gradus, associate professor of epidemiology at the Boston University School of Public Health.

"Existing effective treatments are mostly psychotherapy and while they work well there are also issues with them including a lot of treatment drop-out and they're time-intensive so adding to the



When my elder daughter was a toddler she was considered by her grandfather to be his khargosh or silky rabbit. She was chubby, fair and so gorgeous that everyone wanted to lift her and cradle her in their arms. When someone once lifted her rather carelessly by one arm, she as delicate as she was, she dislocated her elbow. She was in great pain. I took her to an orthopaedician who corrected the dislocation and placed her arm in a plaster cast. She cried through the entire procedure and continued to sob even after we returned home. Finally, out of sheer exhaustion, she fell asleep in my lap. By then, I too had dozed off. When I woke up my shirt was wet. It was because of my little girl drooling in her sleep. Her tear-stained innocent face; moist and curved eye lashes; saliva trickling from her rosy lips and my wet shirt remained etched in my mind.



## Baby Teeth and Silver Hair

Dr. Shri Gopal Kabra  
Veteran Doctor & Vocacious writer on medical affairs

Baby-teeth memories are everlasting. I once spotted a toddler approach the deity in a temple while holding his mother's hand. The young mother had brought him for a morning stroll in the community park. Their sojourn included a visit to a small temple in the vicinity. The mother stood before the deity with folded hands, praying silently. She then bade the child to salute the deity with a "Jai, Jai Bhagwanji!" The child put his little hands together and bowed.

When the mother went on her knees to perform maatha tekne (touching her head to the floor in obeisance), the child did the same. I was fascinated by the way he imitated his mother.

As they turned to leave, the child spotted me. Possibly attracted by my silvery hair and smile he smiled too. It was spontaneous and revealed a few small, pearly-white, perfect baby teeth. Following the child's gaze, the mother saw me, saluted, and asked her child to say "Jai! Jai!" to dadu (grandfather). The child folded his hands and saluted me with a "Jai! Jai!" I raised my hand and blessed him with the customary "Titte bade ho jao!" (Be blessed and be so big!). The proud mother fondly asked him, "Dadu ne kitna badaa kiya?" (how big did dadu bless you?). Raising his hand he responded, "Ita badaa!" (This big!). A few onlookers smiled as the mother and the child walked out.

My day was made! What could be a better carry-home for an old man than an enchanting baby smile and a "Jai! Jai!" To me it was like a morning darshan (vision) of Ramlala (Lord Ram as a child incarnate). The smile would keep me company for many days to come and



Sun bird feeder.

When one grows old the small things in life become sources of great pleasure and contentment. The first thing I do in the morning is to clean and charge my sunbird feeder with sugar water. Chirping purple males, ash-coloured females and boisterously flapping chicks, dip their long beaks into the feeder base to sip the sweetness within.

## #BABA

light up the spells of loneliness that 80-year-olds have to endure. I couldn't help thinking that the baby teeth revealed to me in that cherubic smile were whiter than my hair.

The incident reminded me of my mother's tiny silver Ramlala. She did not simply worship Ramlala, but as she used to repeatedly stress did his seva which means she cared for him. Indeed, her seva ritual for the infant Ram was as affectionate as the care she gave me when I was a child. She would awaken Ramlala gently with a harjas (holy chant), bathe him with gulab jal (rose water), collect the run-off as charnamrat (holy water), lovingly dress him in a tiny poshak (dress) that she herself had made, enthrone him and offer him cashew nuts and raisins that later became prashad for us to be blessed with.

### Bestowing Abundance

I sometimes think that she got greater satisfaction performing this ritual than she got dressing me! Every morning, we would bow before her and the deity, and accept charnamrat and prashad. When she affectionately placed her hand on our head to bless us she would virtually bestow Ramlala on us. Even at the ripe age of 85, I feel so small remembering my mother and I often yearn for the soft touch of her hand and crave to be cared for like a baby. To imagine oneself as a child is to

lose oneself in blissful memories. When one grows old the small things in life become sources of great pleasure and contentment. The first thing I do in the morning is to clean and charge my sunbird feeder with sugar water. Tiny sunbirds waiting in the bushes appear and flock on the feeder. Chirping purple males, ash-coloured females and boisterously flapping chicks, dip their long beaks into the feeder base to sip the sweetness within. While I sip my morning tea, the little birds frolic and chase each other while intermittently returning to perch on the feeder platform for a quick sip. Even during the pandemic they never failed to arrive and company me. For many months of the lockdown that we had to endure these faithful flying jewels were my only visitors.

I had obtained this bird feeder from my younger daughter in Seattle. Ever since I set it up, I feel her presence. Image of her sitting in her nursery teacher's lap and resting one chubby cheek against her, flash before my eyes. Being the youngest in her class, she was the teacher's pet. Nostalgia is indeed sweet.

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Nowadays, when I nod off while reading a book, I wake up thinking I am wet and the book on my lap is her face. So powerful is this image that I often hesitate to move the book thinking I might awaken my daughter.

### Rekindling Affection

My son is over fifty years old now. He has an adult daughter and a son who are independent, confident and assertive. My love and affection for my son is deep but does not carry the same degree of tenderness that I feel for my daughters. Yet, when he recently fractured his ankle and it had to be put in a cast, I was reminded of the time when he, as a child, had fractured his thigh and had to be similarly placed in a plaster cast. At that time I would carry him to the toilet, give him his bath, feed him and read to him. The concern and affection that I felt for him when he was a child with a major injury was now rekindled. To me, he is still my small child even though I cannot - and am unable to, anyway - carry him.

Thinking over the baby in the temple, I am certain that there is an innate relation between silvery hair and a baby-tooth smile. Once, when I was travelling by train, my silvery hair was again the object of juvenile



## Individual Rights Day

In honour of John Locke, whose philosophical writings argued for the rights of each single human being, Individual Rights Day is celebrated on August 29th, the date of Locke's birth. According to Locke, "Anything that a man has as a matter of human rights or civil rights is to remain inviolably his." He held that basic individual rights include life, liberty, property, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom to petition government.



## #J'ADORE

### Offbeat Ethnic Looks

Oxidised jewellery creates a beautiful look with anything you team it up with. They look equally stunning in sarees as they do with jeans.



#### Bangles / Kadas

Probably a trend especially amongst the college-going girls, oxidised bangles and bracelets are a hit amongst fashionable girls. These bangles glam up the regular look easy, making it look like a style upgrade.

#### Necklaces

From a bold choker to long rani haar, from a dainty chain to mid-length necklace, oxidised necklaces are meant for all moods. Adding ribbons, laces, feathers, stones into the design of such necklaces is creatively done to give a huge variety to the buyers.



#### Earrings

Whether it is the Jhumkas, Chandbails, earrings with tassels and pearls, long drop earrings with pompons or a simple ear stud with a diamond in the center, oxidised earrings in all forms look beautiful and versatile. These can be paired with Kurtis, Indo-western outfits, sarees, lehengas, long skirts, Indian suits, and so on.

#### Chokers

The newest addition to the oxidised jewellery trend is Oxidised Chokers. These designs are inspired by the west, yet the roots are kept Indian. It is a combination of western and Indian designs which works wonders for young and modern Indian girls and women.

#### Finger Rings and Nose Rings

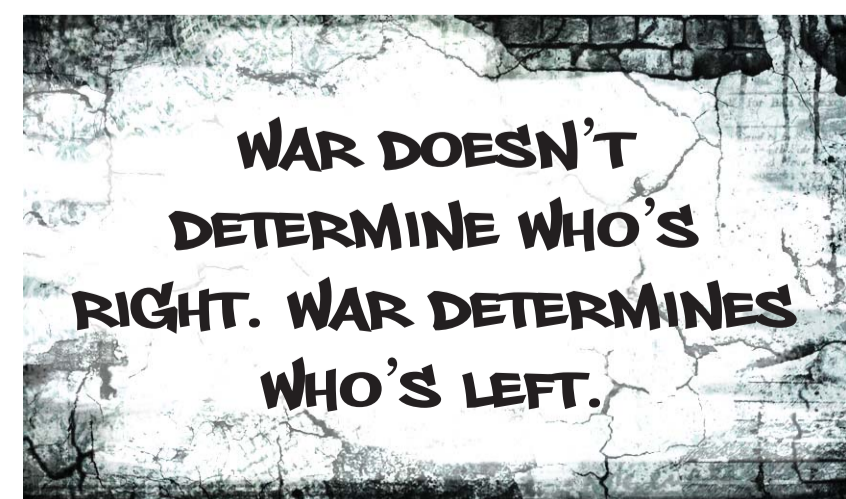
A ring, whether for the finger or for the nose when oxidised is bound to add so much prettiness to a woman's hand and face. Big oxidised finger rings look like statement piece of jewellery and oxidised nose rings give an edge to a woman's look.

#### Poms-Poms

If you are planning to add a dash of youthful magic to your jewellery collection poms-poms are your go-to accessory. The poms-poms on jewellery trend is catching up fast with trendy fashionistas. Apart from these oxidised payals, baaju bandhs, maang tikas, kaan ki chains, and kamar bandhs are also very popular amongst women who choose to wear this kind of jewellery for various events. The more contemporary designs of necklaces, earrings, nose rings and bangles in oxidised jewellery are also a trend amongst the working women as they feel comfortable pairing their oxidised jewellery with their formal office wears too.



## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman