The TOP DD Study is the largest and only international treatment study of dissociative disorders. Leaders in the field of dissociative disorders recognized that there were few research studies assessing how dissociative disordered patients respond to treatment. This paucity of research contributes to the limited awareness of dissociative disorders and a lack of training for treatment providers.

A team of investigators came together and established the Treatment of Patients with Dissociative Disorders (TOP DD) Study, or TOP DD Study, led by Bethany Brand, Ph.D., and recruited approximately 290 therapists and their patients from 19 countries around the world.

The success of the study is attributed to the generous sharing of time and treatment experiences by the participants. The study has operated on a very small budget from private donations. In reflecting upon its germination and subsequent successes, Bethany Brand, PhD, Principle Investigator of the study and Professor of Psychology at Towson University, stated that having so many therapists and clients involved "truly makes this a grassroots effort and a community success."

The initial TOP DD Study is providing fascinating insights into how dissociative disorders patients respond to treatment. The 6, 18, and 30 month follow-up data indicated that patients showed fewer symptoms of depression, dissociation, and PTSD, as well as lower levels of general distress, fewer suicide attempts and hospitalizations, and less self-injurious behaviors and dangerous behaviors than at the beginning of the study. Additionally, therapists rated patients as having higher adaptive functioning at follow-up. Currently, the researchers have completed the 30-month follow-up data collection and are continuing to analyze the data to learn more about how different variables (e.g., treatment alliance)
impact dissociative disorders treatment. Thus far, the study has led to seven publications about its findings.

The goal of the next phase of the TOP DD study is to develop a web-based psychoeducational intervention for patients and their therapists to participate in to determine if participation in the study is associated with decreased symptoms and improved functioning for individuals with dissociative disorders. The results of this study will have important implications for the dissociative disorders field which is particularly important as the medical and mental health fields require empirical evidence that treatments benefit patients.

**TOP DD Research Team Publications:**


Brand, B.L., & Stadnik, R. (2013). What contributes to predicting change in treatment of dissociation: Initial levels of dissociation, PTSD, or overall distress? Journal of Trauma & Dissociation, 14, 328-341.


Myrick, A.C., Brand, B.L., & Putnam, F.W. (in press). For better or worse: The role of revictimization and stress in the course of treatment for dissociative disorders. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation.*

TOP DD Research Team Future Presentations:
Join us at our symposium at the upcoming ISSTD Annual Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, November 14-18, 2013. The TOP DD study’s presentations will feature the valuable information that we are continuing to learn through patient and therapists' participation in this study.