Author's response to reviews

Title: Dresden PTSD treatment study: Randomized controlled trial of motor vehicle accident survivors (ISRCTN66456536)

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MS 1690545402973590 Dresden PTSD treatment study: Randomized controlled trial of motor vehicle accident survivors (ISRCTN66456536)
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We would like to thank the Reviewers for their thoughtful and constructive comments, and we revised our manuscript accordingly. In this cover letter, we respond to all their major and minor points separately, and indicate the changes we have made.

Reviewer: Anke Ehlers

1. The Reviewer criticized our labels "advanced" and "standard" CBT techniques by objecting that our primary goal seemed to be to include cognitive procedures and to thereby refer to the Blanchard and Hickling (2003) programme. We acknowledge this critique and changed the paper's title into: Dresden PTSD treatment study: Randomized controlled trial of motor vehicle accident survivors. Throughout the text we deleted all explicit statements on exclusive advancements of our treatment manual. Furthermore, we included the references cited by the Reviewer to our text and acknowledged their achievements. As proposed by the Reviewer, we somewhat extended our description of the posttraumatic growth intervention (see the Methods section).

2. By including the new studies, we also changed our claim that the effect sizes were larger than those achieved in previous studies. We now stated more accurately that the effect sizes are comparable to the early PTSD treatment studies with CBT and are somewhat lower than in recent CBT trials with extended and elaborate cognitive procedures. Nevertheless, we would like to point out that our study is the first comprehensive randomized controlled trial of PTSD psychotherapy carried out in German language.

3. The Reviewer pointed to the fact that sex differences in group composition may have biased our results. We therefore conducted a control analysis, which is now reported in the paper, where we found an even higher significant main effect of time and a significant interaction of group.

4. The limitations described by the Reviewer (large portion of subtreshold PTSD, random allocation) were included into the text.

5.(minor comment) We decided to stick to the effect sizes we reported previously. They stem from the interaction effects in the ANOVAs.

6. (minor comment) This reference had already been cited in first manuscript version.

Reviewer: Jonathan Evans

Major revisions
- The Reviewer wanted to know if we systematically evaluated whether the MVA participants had suffered caused injuries or post-traumatic amnesia. Unfortunately, we did not evaluate these criteria systematically, but relied on the clinical judgment of the study intake assessors. We acknowledge this limitation in the Methods section.
- Due to the present study's diverse research topics and issues, we divided the data set into sub-sets of psychophysiological/neurobiogical and other psychometric ("self-perceived posttraumatic growth") data. We certainly will follow the rules of academic publishing to minimize the duplication of reported data. The following three manuscripts with data on the present trial have been finalized (submitted), or are already in
press:


- We added a more concrete description of the random assignment of participants.
- We added the number of initial homework (reading aloud the trauma report) for the participants.
- All minor remarks were very helpful to improve our English spelling.