Reviewer's report

Title: Imaging the trauma: altered cortical dynamics after repeated traumatic stress

Version: 1 Date: 12 March 2007

Reviewer: Douglas Bremner

Reviewer's report:

This is a study of magneto encephalography (MEG) in PTSD. 97 survivors of torture and war and torture were compared to 97 controls. The finding was of increased slow wave activity in the left temporal lobe with greatest changes near the insula.

The title is not instructive. The authors are not imaging the trauma, they are imaging the brain correlates of trauma.

The conclusion of the abstract is overstated, stating that the insula is involved in coupling emotion from language making trauma victims speechless. It is better to only state the results.

It is not clear what the background is for connecting the insula with speech. The insula is involved in integrating central brain processes with peripheral visceral and autonomic function.

It appears that MEG was done at rest, which adds the limitations of all studies done at rest without specific symptom provocation or task.

There was little review of brain imaging studies in PTSD which would be relevant to the current study.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests