

**Medscape from WebMD Survey Finds that Approximately 40% of Clinicians Believe They Are Not Prepared to Counsel Patients on War Anxiety or Answer Bioterrorism Questions**

**New York, NY (April 14, 2003)** – Given the war in Iraq and the high level terror alert in the United States, many Americans have reported elevated anxiety and stress. While healthcare providers are likely outlets for expressing these fears, a recent Medscape from WebMD poll found that clinicians are not well prepared to counsel patients on war anxiety and answer their questions about bioterrorism:

How prepared do you feel to counsel your patients on anxiety about war with Iraq and to answer their questions about bioterrorism?

Not at all prepared.	 16%	(111)
Not very prepared.	 23%	(155)
Somewhat prepared.	 39%	(258)
Very prepared.	 20%	(132)
Total Responses: 656		Poll conducted 04/01/03 to 04/08/03

According to David Riggs, PhD, an assistant professor of psychology in psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania and co-author of the Guidelines for Mental Health Professionals' Response to the Recent Tragic Events in the US (published by the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), healthcare providers should talk to their patients since most are unlikely to report anxiety related to the war as a problem and encourage patients to rely on coping mechanisms normally used to manage stress, such as relaxation techniques, exercise and seeking support systems among friends and family.

While it is normal for people to feel stressed and anxious under such circumstances, the anxiety should dissipate over time as it becomes clear how the conflict will play out. Those who continue to experience severe anxiety for more than three or four weeks, interfering with normal functioning, should be referred for appropriate treatment.

To read the complete interview with Dr. Riggs, visit <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/451140>; to see complete results of the poll, visit <http://www.medscape.com/px/instantpollservlet/result?PollID=740>; or for more information, go to [www.Medscape.com](http://www.Medscape.com).

**About Medscape Instant Polls:** Medscape from WebMD conducts four 'Instant Polls' per month on issues that are relevant to its members. Each question is developed by a Medscape Editor and is then reviewed by an independent poll reviewer from the Harvard Opinion Research Program at the Harvard School of Public Health, who evaluates each question for clarity and bias.

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