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Blood test could help diagnose PTSD

◆ Post-traumatic stress disorder could soon be diagnosed with a simple blood test after scientists found genetic changes in soldiers suffering from trauma after serving in Afghanistan.

Until now, PTSD could only be diagnosed through self-reported symptoms, which many victims, particularly servicemen, were reluctant to disclose.

But scientists at the University of Maastricht discovered crucial differences in the microRNA molecules of soldiers who had served

time in Afghanistan. Unlike DNA which provides the genetic code for functions in the body, microRNA regulates how active those genes are.

When they looked at eight Afghanistan veterans who had suffered trauma and developed PTSD they found differences in 40 microRNA molecules compared to soldiers who had not fought.

The scientists' results were presented at the annual meeting of the European College of Neuropharmacology in Paris.