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## **Study: Significant Reduction in Posttraumatic Stress for Congolese Refugees Practicing Transcendental Meditation (VIDEO)**

*Russell Simmons & David Lynch Comment on Relief Through Meditation*

*David Lynch Foundation Funds Study, Interviews Refugees Before & After Practicing TM*

**New York, NY – April 9, 2013:** African war refugees practicing a simple, stress-reducing meditation technique experienced immediate reductions in posttraumatic stress symptoms in just 30 days, according to a new study in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, published online on Monday, April 8 and to appear in print in Volume 26, Issue 2. **Symptoms went from “severe” at the start of the study to “non-symptomatic levels” after just 30 days of Transcendental Meditation and remained low at 135 days.**

Refugees who participated in the study came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo where they had been exposed to years of combat, sexual assault, torture or brutality and/or forced to witness the abuse or killing of loved ones. The David Lynch Foundation (DLF) visited Africa to speak with some of the study participants, including Esperance Ndozi, a 2009 refugee.



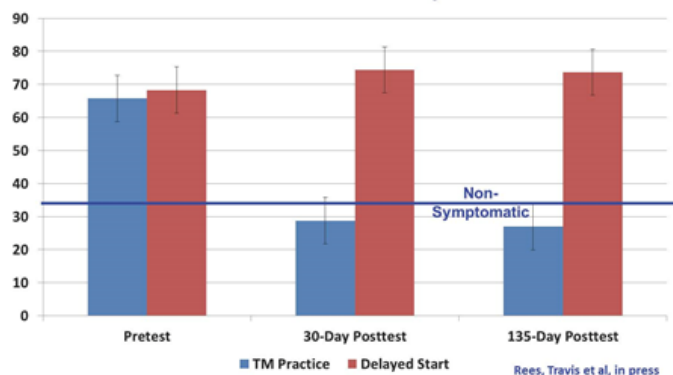
*Click to watch Esperance tell her story.*

“Everyone can benefit from Transcendental Meditation, but perhaps most especially those who have been victims of terrible trauma,” said **Russell**

**Simmons**, hip-hop pioneer and longtime advocate for bringing meditation to underserved populations. “I congratulate the David Lynch Foundation for their great work in bringing relief through TM to those who need it the most in the world.”

“For too many people in the West, the suffering of Esperance and millions of other abused women and children in Africa is, sadly, just a statistic. But they are not numbers. Their suffering is real and they live a nightmare. My hope is that the dramatic results of this new study will ensure the necessary financial support to bring this meditation to everyone in need in Africa and around the world,” added **David Lynch**, filmmaker and founder and chair of the David Lynch Foundation.

### Posttraumatic Stress Scores in African Refugees Practicing the Transcendental Meditation Technique



symptoms remaining low after 135 days. In contrast, PTS symptoms in the non-meditating control group *increased* over the four-month period.

"We anticipated improvement, but I didn't expect this magnitude of change," said the lead author of the study, Colonel Brian Rees M.D., M.P.H., who has completed five tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. "The continued improvement at four months also led us to conclude that TM may be a very worthwhile intervention for anyone suffering from posttraumatic stress."

"These findings suggest that TM may be an effective antidote to the rising incidence of PTS in the world," said Fred Travis, Ph.D., Director for the Center for Brain, Consciousness, and Cognition at Maharishi University of Management (MUM) and a co-author of the study.

This study comes on the heels of the announcement in January 2013 that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is conducting a \$2.4 million study on TM as a form of treatment for U.S. veterans suffering from PTS. The benefits of meditation have been studied and found effective by the **Harvard School of Medicine**, the **National Institutes of Health**, the **U.S. Department of Defense**, the **American Heart Association** and the **American Medical Association**. Meditation has been proven to reduce acute and chronic stress and stress-related disorders, decrease anxiety and depression, help individuals overcome addictions and simultaneously develop the brain and creative potential of the individual for a healthy, productive and self-sufficient life.

The study was conducted by African PTSD Relief, an independent organization dedicated to teaching Transcendental Meditation to people in Africa who suffer from posttraumatic stress, in partnership with researchers at the MUM Research Institute, who have investigated the effects of practice of TM across a wide range of clinical groups.

The study was funded by the David Lynch Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charity founded by iconic filmmaker David Lynch to bring meditation to at-risk populations.

A summary of the study in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* is available at <http://www.istss.org/JournalofTraumaticStress.htm>. Access to the complete study may be requested through African PTSD Relief by contacting [fravis@mum.edu](mailto:fravis@mum.edu) or [brian.m.rees2.mil@mail.mil](mailto:brian.m.rees2.mil@mail.mil).

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#### About The David Lynch Foundation

The David Lynch Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, was established in 2005 to fund the implementation of scientifically proven stress-reducing modalities including Transcendental Meditation, for at-risk populations such as underserved inner-city students; veterans with PTSD and their families; women and girls who have been victims of violence, rape, and abuse, American Indians suffering from diabetes and high suicide rates; homeless adults and teens participating in reentry programs; and incarcerated adults and juveniles. For more information, visit [www.davidlynchfoundation.org](http://www.davidlynchfoundation.org).

The randomized/matched study measured the severity of posttraumatic stress (PTS) in African refugees before and after learning the Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique. A total of 42 refugees took part in the study. Half were assigned to learn TM immediately, while the other half were assigned to a control group for comparison. For measurement purposes, all of the refugees were given the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist (PCL) on Day 1, Day 30 and Day 135 after TM practice.

The TM group experienced significant reductions in symptoms after 30 days with

**About the Journal of Traumatic Stress (JTS)**

The *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, the official publication for the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, is an interdisciplinary forum for the publication of peer-reviewed original papers on bio-psychosocial aspects of trauma. The journal publishes original articles, brief reports, review papers and commentaries.

Contact JTS: [jots@ucsf.edu](mailto:jots@ucsf.edu)

**About African PTSD Relief**

African PTSD Relief is a non-profit organization working in partnership with the David Lynch Foundation (DLF) and other national and international NGO's and organizations to teach Transcendental Meditation to people in Africa who suffer posttraumatic stress as a result of decades of war. African PTSD Relief's goal is to teach TM to one million Africans with PTSD over the next five years. Contact African PTSD Relief: <http://www.davidlynchfoundation.org/africa>.

**About Maharishi University of Management**

Maharishi University of Management (MUM), formerly known as Maharishi International University, is an American non-profit university located in Fairfield, Iowa. It was founded in 1973 by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and features a Consciousness-Based Education system that includes the practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique. Its founding principles include the development of the full potential of the individual, fulfilling economic aspirations while maximizing proper use of the environment and bringing spiritual fulfillment and happiness to humanity. The university is accredited through the Ph.D. level by The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and offers degree programs in art, business, education, communications, mathematical science, literature, physiology & health, Vedic Science and sustainable living. Contact MUM: <https://www.mum.edu>.

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