

ACUTE STRESS DISORDER (ASD)

Does not include acute or chronic Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); For PTSD, see case definition.

Background

This case definition was developed by the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine (USAFSAM) and the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Division (AFHSD) for the purpose of epidemiological surveillance of acute stress disorder.

Clinical Description

Acute stress disorder (ASD), also known as acute stress reaction, is a mental health condition that may be triggered immediately after a traumatic event. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, approximately 19 percent of people will develop ADS after experiencing a traumatic event.¹ Although the condition shares many of the same symptoms as PTSD, ASD is a distinct diagnosis. Differences between the two conditions include the timeframe between the traumatic event and symptom onset, and the duration of symptoms. In ASD, symptoms appear within 4 weeks of the event and last between 3 days and 4 weeks. In PTSD, symptoms may appear later and must persist for at least 4 weeks.²

Case Definition and Incidence Rules (2017-present)

For surveillance purposes, a case of ASD is defined as:

- *One hospitalization* with a case-defining diagnosis of ASD (see ICD9 and ICD10 codes below) in *any* diagnostic position; or
- *One outpatient or Theater Medical Data Store (TMDS) medical encounter* with a case defining diagnosis of ASD (see ICD9 and ICD10 codes below) in *any* diagnostic position.

Incidence rules:

For individuals who meet the case definition:

- The incidence date is considered the date of the first hospitalization or outpatient medical encounter that includes a case-defining diagnosis of ASD.
- An individual is considered an incident case *once per lifetime*.
- For an individual with a case-defining diagnosis of ASD *and* a case-defining diagnosis of PTSD within the same surveillance period, the two conditions are considered mutually exclusive, and PTSD is prioritized over ASD.

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¹ Acute Stress Disorder. PTSD: National Center for PTSD. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/essentials/acute_stress_disorder.asp. Accessed August 2026.

² American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. 5th ed., text rev. American Psychiatric Association Publishing; 2022.



Case Definition and Incidence Rules *(continued)*

Exclusions:

- None

Codes

The following ICD9 and ICD10 codes are included in the case definition:

Condition	ICD-10-CM Codes	ICD-9-CM Codes
Acute Stress Disorder (ASD)	F43.0 (acute stress reaction)	308 (acute reaction to stress)
		- 308.0 (predominant disturbance of emotions)
		- 308.1 (predominant disturbance of consciousness)
		- 308.2 (predominant psychomotor disturbance)
		- 308.3 (other acute reaction to stress)
		- 308.4 (mixed disorders as reaction to stress)
		- 308.9 (unspecified acute reaction to stress)

Development

- This case definition was developed in October 2017 by the Epidemiology Consult Service Division, Public Health and Preventive Medicine Department, United States Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine (USAFSAM), for a description of stress disorders among active duty personnel in support of the U.S. Air Force Invisible Wounds Initiative. The case definition was developed based on reviews of the ICD9 and ICD10 codes, the scientific literature, and a modification of the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch (AFHSB) case definition for PTSD.

Case Definition Incidence Rule Rationale

- Because ASD is a transient disorder that may be seen only once in an inpatient or outpatient setting, the case definition uses *one* inpatient or *one* outpatient medical encounter in *any* diagnostic position to increase sensitivity.

Reports

The AFHSD reports on ASD in the following reports:

- None



Revisions and Review

Sep 2026	Case definition reviewed and updated by the AFHSD Surveillance Methods and Standards (SMS) working group
Jan 2022	Case definition reviewed and updated by the AFHSD SMS working group.
Jun 2019	Case definition reviewed and adopted by the AFHSB SMS working group.
Oct 2017	Case definition developed by USAFSAM.

Comments

*ASD / PTSD Diagnostic Criteria:*² The diagnosis of ASD and PTSD is, in part, dependent upon the duration of symptoms. When describing the condition, the following specifiers may be used:

- *Acute Stress Disorder:* symptoms for 0-1 months.
- *Acute PTSD:* symptoms for 2-3 months, < 3 months.
- *Chronic PTSD:* symptoms for > 3 months.
- *PTSD with delayed onset:* At least 6 months have passed between the traumatic event and the onset of the symptoms.

