

220,000 treated for post-traumatic stress

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MORE people are being treated for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than are serving in Britain's armed forces, it emerged last night.

The UK Government said 220,000 individuals seek help for the condition.

The revelation, uncovered by the BBC, comes as lawyers increasingly cite PTSD when trying to sue on behalf of people who have endured even the

most minor accident, such as a low-speed car crash or "shunt".

Scotland's leading expert in the condition last night said the diagnosis of PTSD had become far too loose, allowing lawyers to capitalise.

Professor David Alexander, the psychiatrist who treated the survivors of the 1988 Piper Alpha disaster, said: "What I am worried about is that they are devaluing the currency of trauma, which I think is an insult to people who have suffered genuinely catastroph-

ic events. Perhaps some of these patients would be better given another diagnosis, perhaps work-related stress."

Scottish GPs in 2007-2008 are thought to have taken more than 3,000 consultations with people suffering from PTSD.

But Scotland on Sunday can reveal the number of people receiving the most serious treatment for the condition has doubled over the past decade north of the border.

The number of patients given either inpatient or day care for

PTSD at non-psychiatric hospitals rocketed from 22 men and nine women in 1999 to 48 men and 20 women in 2008, the Scottish Government said. The figures for PTSD inpatients at psychiatric hospitals, however, have barely changed in the decade, hovering at around 100 a year.

The rising tide of PTSD diagnoses will be fully revealed on BBC's *Panorama*.

■ *Panorama, The Trauma Industry*, will be shown on BBC 1 tomorrow night at 8.30pm.

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