The Effect of Childhood Victimization in Adults

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Introduction

Trauma can be defined as an extremely disturbing episode in which a person was involved directly or indirectly, in situations where life was in danger or perceived as devastating [1].

The experience of traumatic situations is related to psychological symptoms and disorders in adulthood [2]. Traumatic experiences can affect the cognitive, affective and social development of the children in different ways, and those psychological consequences may be visible in adulthood [3]. The traumatic event with the greatest impact on children is the experience of sexual abuse. The physical and emotional abuse also contributes to the prevalence of psychopathology in adulthood [4].

Objective

This study aims to analyze the impact of childhood traumatic events on adults.

Measures

- Sociodemographic questionnaire
- Childhood Trauma Questionnaire – CTQ-SF [5]
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist [6]
- Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) [7]

Participants

- ♀ 266 individuals (83.6%)
- ♂ 52 individuals (16.4%)
- Ages between 18 and 89 years old (M = 29.69; DP = 13.23)

Results

Comparison between genders and Childhood Trauma and Symptomatology (*n*=318)

	Men		Women				
	M	*DP*	*M*	*DP*	*T*	*gl*	*p*
Sexual Abuse	5.21	.75	5.56	1.78	-2.29	182.62	0.023*
Somatization	2.56	3.61	5.29	5.34	-4.57	100.36	<.001***
Obsession-Compulsion	5.48	4.81	7.05	5.21	-2.01	1.316	.045*
Interpersonal Sensitivity:	3.10	3.64	4.50	4.16	2.28	1.316	.023*
Depression	4.94	5.45	6.72	6.00	1.98	1.316	.049*
Anxiety	4.62	4.08	6.55	5.51	-2.94	91.97	.004**
Psychoticism	3.02	3.61	4.33	4.26	-2.07	1.316	.039*

Note: *** *p*<.001 ** *p*<.01 **p*<.05

Correlations Between Childhood Trauma and Posttraumatic Stress Symptomatology (*n*=318)

	Sexual Abuse	Physical Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Emotional Negligence
PTSD symptoms[a]	.13*	.29***	.42***	-.30***
Reexperience	.05	.22***	.33***	-.21***
Avoidance	.20***	.11*	.22***	-.14*
Hyperarousal	.15**	.32***	.44***	-.33***
Duration	.09	.28***	.38***	-.30***

Note: [a] Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Cheklist (PCL-C) *** *p*<.001 ** *p*<.01 **p*<.05

Discussion and Conclusion

The correlation between the childhood trauma and the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms, showed some statistical significant results.

The emotional abuse had significant correlations with the Symptoms of PTSD, for the total and the subscale Reexperience, Avoidance, Hyperarousal, and Duration.

Concerning the Sexual Abuse, there were significant correlations with the total score, and the subscales Avoidance and Hyperarousal.

On Physical Abuse we verified significant correlations for the total score and the subscales Reexperience, Avoidance, Hyperarousal, Duration.

On Emotional Negligence, there are a significant correlation for the total score and subscales, Reexperience, Avoidance, Hyperarousal, Duration.

Comparing the traumatic events and symptomology between genders, the results showed that there were statistically significant differences, with women reporting greater exposure to Sexual Violence.

Regarding the symptomatology there were statistically significant differences between genders, and women reported greater symptomatology than men.

The childhood victimization can have negative consequences in the life of an adult, and it is important to implement an early intervention that makes it possible to prevent the beginning of psychopathological symptoms.

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