June 2022

The Impact of Trauma Subtypes on PTSD Severity in Syrian Child and Adolescent Refugees

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Recommended Citation
Hinchey, Liza; Grasser, Lana; Saad, Bassem; Gorski, Kathleen; Javanbakht, Arash; and Chammaa, May, "The Impact of Trauma Subtypes on PTSD Severity in Syrian Child and Adolescent Refugees" (2022). Medical Student Research Symposium. 161.
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Title: The Impact of Trauma Subtypes on PTSD Severity in Syrian Child and Adolescent Refugees

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Abstract

Background: Child and adolescent refugee populations are at increased risk for psychiatric disorders including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and anxiety. Recent studies have demonstrated different symptomatology based on the type(s) of traumatic events experienced. Cluster analyses based on the Life Events Checklist (LEC) indicate three trauma subtypes: accidental/injury, victimization, and predominant death threat. Extending this line of research from adults to youth may lead to better understanding of the unique impacts of trauma subtypes on symptoms for improved prediction of risk and resilience.

Methods: Refugee participants were recruited within 1 month of their resettlement in the U.S. Data used were collected from 12–24 months post resettlement. PTSD symptoms were assessed by the UCLA-PTSD Reaction Index for Children and Adolescents; anxiety symptoms were assessed by the Screen for Child Anxiety Related Disorders (SCARED); somatic symptoms were assessed by the Somatic Symptom Scale-8 (SSS-8). With the reference point of cumulative trauma, linear regression models will be tested to establish if trauma subtypes better explain the variance in symptomatology, controlling for age and gender.

Results: Analysis is currently being completed and results will be available by the conference date. So far in this population, war related trauma has been shown to have a larger impact vs trauma secondary to natural disasters, human violence, and accidents.

Conclusions: This study will contribute to better risk stratification and understanding about the development of trauma-related psychopathology after trauma exposure. This could result in targeted prevention interventions.

Keywords: refugees, trauma, PTSD, anxiety, somatic