

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Depression Among Children of War

Diala F Ammar*

Department of Psychology, Lebanese American University, Lebanon

It is well established that children living in conflict areas suffer from long term mental health problems. In fact, children in zones of war are exposed to a range of traumatic events that could affect the normal cognitive, emotional and functional well-being [1]. Exposure to violence is almost always correlated with symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorders (PTSD) and depression. Previous studies have reported chronic PTSD symptoms [2,3], high comorbidity of depression [4], anxiety, fear, anger [5], decrease in attention and school performance [6-8], sleep problems [7,9,10] and somatic complaints [11]. Several underlying mechanisms have been linked to the presence and/severity of PTSD symptoms include displacement, loss of property, exposure, severity, length of combat and social network support [12].

Most studies on children and war are limited to self-report data with limited focus on symptoms and culturally specific information related to risk factors and coping mechanisms. The complex association between traumatic events and mental health needs to equally investigate risk and protective factors, with careful examination of the dynamics involved in traumatic events.

Researches related to identifying specific protective mechanisms and early intervention are urgently needed to decrease long-term distress endured by children of war. There is an urgent need to increase awareness related to the impact of trauma and war on children mental health and development. Early intervention programs are necessary to curb the distress endured by children during and after war.

References

1. Maughan A, Cicchetti D (2002) Impact of child maltreatment and interadult violence on children's emotion regulation abilities and socioemotional adjustment. *Child Dev* 73: 1525-1542.
2. Kinzie JD, Sack WH, Angell RH, Manson S, Rath B (1986). The psychiatric effects of massive trauma on Cambodian children: 1. The children. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry* 25: 370-376.
3. Macksoud MS, Aber JL (1996) The war experiences and psychosocial development of children in Lebanon. *Child Dev* 67: 70-88.
4. Hubbard J, Realmuto GM, Northwood AK, Masten AS (1995) Comorbidity of psychiatric diagnoses with posttraumatic stress disorder in survivors of childhood trauma. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry* 34: 1167-1173.
5. Scrimin S, Moscardino U, Capello F, Axia G (2009) Attention and memory in school-age children surviving the terrorist attack in Beslan, Russia. *J Clin Child Adolesc Psychol* 38: 402-414.
6. Saigh PA, Mrueh M, Bremner JD (1997) Scholastic impairments among traumatized adolescents. *Behav Res Ther* 35: 429-436.
7. Yule W (2002). Alleviating the effects of war and displacement on children. *Traumatology* 8: 160-180
8. Ronen T, Rahav G, Rosenbaum M (2003) Children's reaction to war situation as a function of age and sex. *Anxiety Stress Coping* 16: 59-69.
9. Montgomery E, Foldspang A (2005) Seeking asylum in Denmark: refugee children's mental health and exposure to violence. *Eur J Public Health* 15: 233-237.
10. Pine DS, Cohen JA (2002) Trauma in children and adolescents: Risk and treatment of psychiatric sequelae. *Biol Psychiatry* 51: 519-531.
11. Vizek-Vidovic V, Kuterovac-Jagodic G, Arambasic L (2000) Posttraumatic Symptomatology in children exposed to war. *Scand J Psychol* 41: 297- 306.
12. Llabre MM, Hadi F (1997) Social support and psychological distress in Kuwaiti boys and girls exposed to the Gulf crisis. *J Clin Child Psychol* 26: 247-255.

*Corresponding author: Diala F Ammar, Department of Psychology, Lebanese American University, Lebanon, Tel: +96170643603; E-mail: diala.ammar@lau.edu.lb

Received October 26, 2012; Accepted October 26, 2012; Published October 29, 2012

Citation: Ammar DF (2012) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Depression Among Children of War. *J Depress Anxiety* 1:e102. doi:[10.4172/2167-1044.1000e102](https://doi.org/10.4172/2167-1044.1000e102)

Copyright: © 2012 Ammar DF. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.