

The Effect Of Sexual Violence; The Relation Between Post-traumatic Cognitions And Post-traumatic Stress Symptomatology

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Background

Sexual violence results in both physical and psychological damage on people's lives. Although Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Major Depression (MD) are the two disorders that are most common after traumatic sexual violence incidents; traumatized individual is not diagnosed as having a major disorder all the time. Traumatic events like sexual assaults have deep impact on cognitions, which make people vulnerable to psychopathologies.

Aim

The aim of this study is to display the effect of the traumatic event on cognitions and the relation between cognitions and the symptoms of post-traumatic stress. In addition to this, the mediating role of the depressive symptoms in the relation between post-traumatic cognitions and post-traumatic stress symptoms is also investigated.

Method

The data used in this study gathered from the 70 female outpatients who applied to Istanbul University, Istanbul Medicine Faculty Department of Forensic Medicine, between the years of 2012-2014 in order to receive an expert witness report related to being sexually abused. The tools used in the study were demographic information form, The Post-traumatic Diagnostic Scale (PDS), The Post-traumatic Cognitions Inventory (PTCI) and Beck Depression Inventory.

Results

Subjects of the studies age varies between 14 to 51. The, %84.3 of the subjects was forced to either vaginal and/or anal intercourse. The %75.7 of the subjects was abused in their adulthood, %20 of them was abused as children and the %4.3 of the subjects was abused both in adulthood and childhood. The %80.3 of the offenders was familiar to the victims. It is stated that the %34.3 of the subjects attempted to end their lives after the incident and the %22.9 of them has still the idea of ending their lives during the interview.

The statistical analysis indicates that PTCI predicted the significant amount of the variance, PDS ($\beta = .31$, $t = 5.64$, $p < .01$). It is found that negative assault-related appraisals with respect to oneself predicted the significant amount of the post-traumatic stress symptoms ($\beta = .49$, $p < .01$). It is found that negative assault-related appraisals with respect to oneself

predicted the significant amount of the depressive symptoms ($\beta = .61, p < .01$).

Discussion

Consistent with the literature, it is found that the distorted cognitions after the traumatic event related to post traumatic stress symptoms. However, before that distorted cognitions caused depressive symptomatology and in this respect the existence of depressive symptoms make this relationship stronger.

Conclusion

To sum up, there is a significant role of the negative appraisals occurred in post-traumatic cognitions in experiencing both depressive and post-traumatic stress symptoms. Working with posttraumatic cognitions in the treatment of the sexual assault victims is crucially fundamental in order to repair posttraumatic stress symptomatology.