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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNALIZED STIGMA AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY IN SEXUALLY ABUSED INDIVIDUALS**

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**Objective:** The internalized stigma is a concept that is discussed mostly in severe mental illnesses and especially in schizophrenia. However, this concept is not studied in sexually traumatized people, yet. In this study, we aimed to investigate the internalized stigma and related features in sexually abused individuals.

**Methods:** The participants who were the victim of sexual abuse and sent by courts to be examined for mental state were planned to be included in the study and after giving informed consent, 44 females were included. Participants were asked to complete the scales of Internalized Stigma Questionnaire for Mental Disorders, Beck Depression and Hopelessness Scales.

**Results:** No significant differences were found between participants who had been diagnosed a psychiatric disorder or not after victimization according to total score of internalized stigma scale and subscale scores ( $p>0.05$ ). There were significant correlations between mean Beck depression and hopelessness scale scores and internalized stigma scale mean total score and subscale scores (alienation, stereotype endorsement, discrimination experience, social withdrawal, and resistance to stigma).

**Conclusion:** Self-stigmatized behaviors are seen in all participants who have been sexually abused and there was no difference according to such behaviors between participants whom had been diagnosed as mentally ill or not after victimization. However, an existing self-stigmatization is increasing in the existence of psychopathology. The responsibility of the professionals in mental health should develop new therapeutic or rehabilitative approaches to all sexually abused victims whether they meet psychiatric diagnostic criteria or not.