

### Anxiety, Depression and Childhood War Trauma

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**Introduction:** Previous research has confirmed that various types of trauma, related to both wartime and peacetime, can negatively affect psychological development and promote the occurrence of mental disorders in youth and adults. Results of previous studies in the field of post-conflict mental health suggest that certain psychological consequences can persist for years after traumatic events.

**Objectives:** For this reason we have decided to investigate the presence of anxiety and depression in young people who were exposed to war-related trauma during childhood. Special emphasis is given to clinically significant forms of these emotions.

**Aims:** The aim of the study was to determine the differences in intensity and frequency of clinically relevant anxiety and depression in students exposed to warfare during childhood.

**Methods:** The study comprised 324 students from Serbia and Kosovo, aged 18-25, exposed to war-related events (WREs) during childhood. We used the General Questionnaire, the Beck Depression Inventory I (BDI-I), and the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI).

**Results:** Approximately 2/3 of all of the examinees had clinically significant anxiety, while 1/3 had clinically significant depression. The females had higher intensity of anxiety (16.22 vs. 11.6;  $p < 0.001$ ) and depression (9.57 vs. 7.05;  $p = 0.004$ ) than males. The examinees who reported WREs from two or three types of events had more intense anxiety ( $p = 0.013$ ) and depression ( $p = 0.013$ ) than a group with one or no WREs.

**Conclusions:** There is an association between WREs during childhood and anxiety as well as depression in adolescence, more prominent in females.