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THE ROLE OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMATIC EVENTS IN FEAR OF PAIN RELATED BEHAVIOURS IN ADULTHOOD

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Introduction: Traumatic experiences during childhood may contribute to somatizing fear and anxiety related pain behaviour.

Objective: This study tested the role of childhood traumatic/stressful events on adult fear related pain behaviours.

Aim: The aim was to investigate the differences in fear of pain, anxiety pain symptoms and heart focused anxiety, among individuals who had been exposed to childhood traumatic/stressful life events in contrast to those who had not experienced.

Method: 595 healthy individuals participated to the present study (164 men - 431 women, mean age 34, SD=12, ranged 18-75). Subjects were classified into two groups— trauma and no-trauma — based on their personal ratings of experienced traumatic and or stressful events during childhood (300 and 295 individuals respectively). In all participants, the Fear of Pain Questionnaire - III (FPQ-III), The Pain Anxiety Symptoms Scale-20 (PASS-20) and the Cardiac Anxiety Questionnaire (CAQ) were administered.

Results: Significant differences between trauma and no-trauma group were observed in almost all total scores and subscales: Severe Pain FPQ-III ($t= 2,992$, $p=.003$), Total FPQ-III ($t=2,443$, $p=.015$), Fearful Thinking PASS-20 ($t=3,616$, $p=.000$), Cognitive Anxiety PASS-20 ($t=2,989$, $p=.003$), Physiological Responses PASS-20 ($t= 3,666$, $p=.000$), Total PASS-20 ($t=3,218$, $p=.001$), Fear CAQ ($t=2,016$, $p=.044$), Avoidance CAQ ($t=2,269$, $p=.024$), Attention CAQ ($t=2,288$, $p=.022$) and Total CAQ ($t=2,749$, $p=.006$).

Conclusion: Our results illustrate the meaningfulness of trauma in clinical practice and are in a similar vein with psychoanalytic thoughts that all types of trauma are firstly psychological traumas.