

P01-136 - A QUATITATIVE ANALYSIS ABOUT THE PREVALENCE OF PTSD AFTER THE CHEMICAL ATTACK I HALABJA/KURDISTAN, IRAQ

F.M. Hasan

Clinic for Traumatized Refugees, Regional Hospital of Psychiatry, Holstebro, Denmark

The March 1988 genocide in Halabja, in which at least 4000 and as many as 7000 Kurdish women, children and men were killed by the then Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein, was the most brutal gas attack on a civil population in modern history. This study is unique in that it challenges currently held understandings of PTSD and how traumatic transformations are expressed in other parts of the world. The study is quantitative analysis of the prevalence of PTSD in two Kurdish towns; Halabja and Suleimaniyah, encompassing 110 participants. The study's primary aim was to compare the prevalence of PTSD in Halabja with that in Suleimaniyah which was not attacked, the expectation being that PTSD would be more prevalent in Halabja than in Suleimaniyah. Secondly, that women and those with shorter education would report a higher prevalence of PTSD, and thirdly that participants with higher levels of social support would report a lower prevalence of PTSD. The results showed that the prevalence of PTSD in total, of reliving and of hyperarousal in the trauma exposed town was significantly higher than in the non-exposed town, thus supporting the primary hypothesis. Furthermore a significant connection was found between sex and PTSD and a clear linear relation between education and prevalence of PTSD, thus supporting the second hypothesis. However, the results showed no support for the third hypothesis. The study thus indicates that researchers and practitioners working with PTSD need a broader cultural understanding to carry out studies in the best possible manner.