PW01-47 - **INCREASED DHEA AND DHEA-S CONCENTRATIONS IN PLASMA OF PATIENTS WITH POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AND A HISTORY OF CHILDHOOD ABUSE**

M. Kellner[1], C. Muhtz[1], F. Peter[1], S. Dunker[1], A. Yassouridis[2], K. Wiedemann[1]

[1]University Hospital Hamburg-Eppendorf, Hamburg, [2]Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry, Munich, Germany

Introduction: Findings about dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) and dehydroepiandrosterone sulphate (DHEA-S) in patients with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have been inconsistent and confusing.

Objective: Although its impact on the regulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical axis has been demonstrated, the potential effect of severe childhood adverse events has not been considered regarding DHEA and DHEA-S data in PTSD.

Aims: We investigated whether a history of severe childhood traumatisation affects these steroids in PTSD patients.

Methods: 33 patients with chronic PTSD (15 with and 18 without sexual and/or severe physical abuse before age 12) were studied in a combined low dose dexamethasone/corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH) test. Mean pre-CRH levels of both plasma DHEA and DHEA-S were significantly increased in the subgroup with childhood abuse, the respective ratios with plasma cortisol were significantly lower. In the entire population of PTSD patients significant amounts of the variation of these parameters could be explained by childhood trauma history.

Conclusions: Further studies are needed to clarify the potential role of DHEA and DHEA-S as biomarkers for severe early adverse events in patients suffering from PTSD and in other stress-related disorders.

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