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EXPOSURE TO TRAUMATIC EVENTS AND POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER SYMPTOMS IN SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER INPATIENTS

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Introduction: Exposure to traumatic events is common among individuals with substance use disorders (SUD). Self-medication hypothesis posits that substances are used to relieve distressing psychological symptoms. Moreover, few studies have assessed exposure to traumatic events and Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms among samples suffering from addiction.

Objectives: To explore SUD inpatients exposure to serious traumatic events both directly (the participant himself) and/or indirectly (the family).

Aims:

- (i) to investigate the prevalence of co-morbid PTSD in SUD clinical inpatients;
- (ii) to identify the characteristics, severity and types of trauma experienced;
- (iii) to compare SUD patients with and without co-morbid PTSD on psychiatric variables.

Methods: This study compared two groups:

- (1) those without PTSD,
- (2) those with PTSD.

SUD inpatients reported traumatic experiences (Trauma History Questionnaire), PTSD symptoms (PTSD CheckList-Specific), addiction severity (Addiction Severity Index), and psychiatric symptoms (M.I.N.I.). Chi square or T tests were conducted to compare rates between non-PTSD group (SUD-only; n=27) and PTSD group (SUD-PTSD; n=17).

Results: All participants (n=44) reported having been exposed to one or more traumatic events and 17 (38.6%) met the criteria for probable current PTSD. Significant differences between the "PTSD" and "non-PTSD" groups were found on the crime cluster ($p < .04$), the composite score of Alcohol ($p < .005$), and psychiatric variables including depression ($p < .001$), psychotic syndromes ($p < .02$) and anxiety disorders ($p < .0001$).

Conclusions: This study highlights the prevalence of PTSD symptoms among SUD inpatients, and the importance of considering PTSD symptoms to improve quality of care for patients and their families.