

Development of Pediatric Medical Trauma Stress (PMTS) Among Children at Risk

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Abstract : Medical procedures, such as surgery, may have traumatic significance for some children. This study examines the relationship between maltreatment in children and the development Pediatric Medical Traumatic Stress (PMTS). To this end, differences in the level of distress of children after surgery were examined between two groups: children who were maltreated ("children at risk") and children from the control group ("children who are not at risk"). The study involved 230 parents of children who came to the hospital to undergo surgery. Parents filled out demographic questionnaires to measure socioeconomic variables and psychological questionnaires to measure the distress of the child and parent before surgery. After 6 months from the time of surgery, the parents again filled in the questionnaire measuring the child's distress. The results of the study showed that the level of distress experienced by children at risk after surgery was significantly higher relative to children who are not at risk. It was also found that the level of distress experienced by parents of children at risk in relation to their child's surgery is significantly higher compared to parents of children who are not at risk. Finally, it was found that the variables: (1) pre-morbid psychological functioning of the child. (2) Parental and family functioning in daily life. (3) Exposure of the child to traumatic events. (4) Support factors for the family. Are variables that predict the development of PMTS in children after surgery, but only for children at risk and not for children who are not at risk. The significance of the findings in relation to the need to identify at-risk populations in the hospitals and the policies derived from them were discussed, and several directions were raised for further research.

Keywords : children at risk, pediatric medical traumatic stress (PMTS), PTSD, medical procedures

Conference Title : ICDPAT 2022 : International Conference on Developmental Psychology and Attachment Theory

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : June 09-10, 2022