

The Psychological Impact of War Trauma on Refugees

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Abstract : The safety and health care needs of refugees have become an increasingly important issue all over the world especially during last few decades. Wars are the primary reason for refugees to leave their countries. Moreover, refugees are frequently exposed to a variety of stressors such as socioeconomic disadvantages, poverty, changes in family structure and functioning, losing social support, difficulty to access education, living in very crowded places, experiencing racism and isolation. This systematic review included research studies published between 2007-2017 from the search databases Medline, Scopus, Cinahl and PubMed, with keywords 'war survivors', 'war trauma', 'psychiatric disorders', 'refugees'. In order to meet the purpose of the systematic review, further research for complementary studies was conducted into the literature references of the research articles included in this study that would meet the criteria. Overall, 14 studies were reviewed and evaluated. The majority of them demonstrated that the most common psychiatric disorders observed among war refugees are post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety and multiple somatic complaints. Moreover, significant relationship was shown between the number of traumatic events experienced by the refugees and sociodemographic features such as gender, age and previous family history of any psychological disorder. War violence is highly traumatic, causing multiple, long-term negative outcomes such as the aforementioned psychiatric disorders. The number of the studies reviewed in this systematic review is not representative of the problem and its significance. The need for care of the survivors and their families is vital. Further research is necessary in order to clarify the role of predictive factors in the development and maintenance of post-traumatic stress and the rest psychiatric disorders following war trauma. In conclusion, it is necessary to have large multicenter studies in the future in order to be able to draw reliable conclusions about the effects of war.

Keywords : psychiatric disorders, refugees, war survivors, war trauma

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