

P03-456

**SUPPORT GROUPS FOR SUICIDE SURVIVORS: SELF REGULATION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT AS MEDIATING THE EFFECT OF RECOVERY**

Y. Levi, S. Weinberg, R. Nadjar

Department of Behavioral Sciences, Ruppin Academic Center, Emek Hefer, Israel

**Introduction:** Individuals grieving a suicide death (suicide survivors) may be at risk for psychiatric complications and suicidal behaviors. Support groups may provide valuable resource for survivors, who often do not seek out mental health treatment. Social support and self regulation which are at the nature of the support groups can facilitate growth from crisis.

**Objectives & aims:** The objective of the present study was to investigate the effectiveness of support groups for suicide survivors. The specific aims were to assess the relationship between group participation and stress related growth and to assess the role of self regulation and social support as mediating variables.

**Methods:** 74 suicide survivors belonged to one of two groups: 32 survivors who participate in a support group, compared with 42 survivors who did not participate. All participants completed questionnaires covering of self regulation, social support and stress related growth.

**Results:** Survivors who participated in a support group showed better recovery from stress than those who didn't participate. The effect was stronger in survivors who lost their offspring. A hierarchical regression indicates that time past from the event as well as self regulation and social support explained more than 33% of the variance of stress related growth.

**Conclusions:** Support groups for suicide survivors are a helpful intervention tool and can serve as a powerful form of primary and secondary prevention. Social support as well as self disclosure to other survivors can facilitate growth from crisis and diminish feelings of guilt, shame and other psychiatric complications.