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PREVALENCE OF POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER IN THE SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS: CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

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Introduction: In some different studies, a high prevalence of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been found in patients with several mental illness (SMI): schizophrenia, schizoaffective and bipolar disorder.

Aims: Evaluate the prevalence and correlates of PTSD in a sample of patients with SMI.

Methods: Adult patients with schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder or bipolar I disorder were enrolled.

Patients who score 3 or more in conceptual disorganisation, hallucinations and/or unusual contents of thinking and 4 in another item of the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS) were excluded.

Interventions:

Sociodemographic data

Traumatic Live Events Questionnaire. Kubany and Hayne, 2001.

Distressing Event Questionnaire. Kubany and Haynes, 2001, related to PTSD diagnostic DSM-IV criteria.

Results:

102 patients were included.

The diagnostic subgroup of SMI patients were: 40 bipolar disorder, 52 schizophrenia and 10 schizoaffective disorder.

The prevalence of PTSD was found in 15.1%: Criterion B (reexperiencing) 34.4%, Criterion C (avoidance and numbing) 27.1%, Criterion D (hyperarousal) 27.1%.

The PTSD was more prevalent in females: 21.7% versus 8.5% ($p = 0.074$). Only in criterion of hyperarousal the differences of gender were significant ($p = 0.02$).

There were no significant differences in diagnostic subgroups ($p = 0.381$).

Patients with PTSD had some suicide attempt history in 64.3% versus in 35.7% the patients without PTSD ($p = 0.042$).

Conclusions: The comorbidity of PTSD in SMI was found in a fifteen percent, and only three patients had been diagnosed.

PTSD is significantly related to history of suicide attempts in patients with SMI.