

## PATTERNS OF MENTAL DISORDERS AND THEIR CO-MORBIDITY WITH CONFLICT-AFFECTED POPULATIONS IN GEORGIA

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**Background:** Internally displaced persons (IDPs) reach almost 6% of Georgia's total population. They were uprooted by the military conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the 1990s and the brief but intensive war with Russia in 2008.

**Aim:** To examine the patterns of mental disorders and functional disability among conflict-affected populations in Georgia.

**Methods:** The study used a cross-sectional household survey design with multi-stage random sampling IDPs and "returnees" (IDPs who have returned to their original villages). Disorders of PTSD, depression, anxiety, and their co-morbidity, were measured, along with functional disability. A range of questions on exposure to violent and traumatic events and demographic and socio-economic characteristics were included. Descriptive and multivariate regression analyses were used.

**Results:** Of 3600 respondents, 24% were recorded with PTSD, 14% with depression, 11% with anxiety. 30% of all respondents had  $\geq 1$  condition and 6% had all 3. Factors significantly associated with the mental disorders and their co-morbidity included greater frequency of exposure to traumatic events, female gender, older age, displacement status, low levels of neighbourhood support, poor community conditions, and a bad economic situation. PTSD mediated the influence of traumatic events on outcomes of depression and anxiety. All 3 disorders significantly influenced functional disability.

**Conclusions:** The study provides the most comprehensive data on mental health problems among conflict-affected populations in Georgia. It highlights the persisting burden of poor mental health and the associated characteristics, and the significant impact of mental disorders on functional disability. It calls for greater access to needs-driven mental health services.