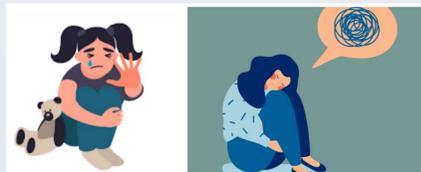




Abstract

The research related to the relationship between childhood maltreatment and anxiety in adults is relatively new. Past studies focused on adults' mental health who have been exposed to adverse childhood experiences, such as childhood maltreatment. The current study affirmed that childhood maltreatment had an increase in anxiety. Similar to other research studies about childhood maltreatment, the current study hopes to raise awareness for this specific population to increase an understanding related to their development. This study can help others validate their traumas by letting victims know that they are not alone; that their pain and mental diagnoses matter. The ability to explore the relationship between childhood maltreatment and adults will help advance other studies.



Introduction

Significance of Study:

Adverse childhood experiences are essential to define mental health effects. Past research showcases the effects that adverse childhood experiences have on adults' mental health, which has made efforts to advance considerably over the past years (Hughes et al., 2016). Childhood maltreatment can play a significant role in how college students manage stress at school. Mental disorders, such as anxiety, can be related to adverse childhood experiences (Karatekin, 2018). This study can help others validate their traumas by letting victims know that they are not alone; that their pain and mental diagnoses matter. The study's outcome is important to social work because it can help influence interventions that will be crucial to helping victims of childhood maltreatment.

Purpose of Study:

The purpose of the current study was to increase knowledge related to the mental health of adults.

Research Question:

What is the relationship between childhood maltreatment and anxiety in adults?

Hypothesis:

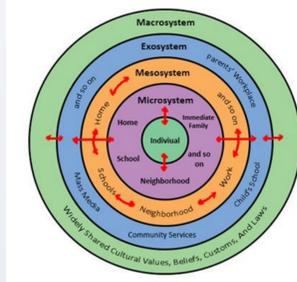
The hypothesis of this study predicts that childhood maltreatment increases the likelihood of anxiety in adults who were abused as children.



Literature Review

Ecological Perspective:

This study was framed by the ecological perspective. Child maltreatment in childhood can lead individuals to stop trusting their immediate social networks, which ends up affecting social relationships and mental health in adulthood.



Adverse Childhood Experiences:

Comprises childhood maltreatment, such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse. It includes exposure to encounters at home, such as divorced parents, intimate partner violence, living with individuals who have a mental illness, living with individuals who have been imprisoned, or living with individuals who have a substance use problem (Fu et al., 2018; Mosley-Johnson et al., 2018; Sieben et al., 2019; Westermair et al., 2018).

Childhood Maltreatment and Mental Health Risk Factors:

- Increasing evidence implies harmful stressors and can happen early in life (Nurius et al., 2015).
- Childhood maltreatment is a risk factor that can cause emotional dysregulation and attachment-related anxiety (Espeleta et al., 2017).
- Adverse childhood experiences are crucial to define because researchers can expose the negative effects on adults' mental health (Hughes et al., 2016).

Descriptive Analysis:

| Variable | Percentage | Variable | Percentage |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Gender | | Education | |
| Male | 45.7 | High School or less | 25.6 |
| Female | 54.3 | Some College | 28.0 |
| Employment | | Marital Status | |
| Employed | 51.8 | College Graduate | 46.4 |
| Unemployed | 48.2 | Married | 72.1 |
| Number of Children | | Separated/Divorced | |
| 0 | 11.6 | Widowed | 5.9 |
| 1 | 9.3 | Never Married | 7.8 |
| 2 | 31 | Ethnicity | |
| 3 | 24.5 | White | 93.9 |
| 4 | 10.5 | Not White | 6.1 |
| 5 | 6.3 | Sexually Assaulted | 17.0 |
| 6+ | 6.9 | Age (years) (SD) | 56.26 (11.78) |
| Scale | | Scale | |
| Emotional Abuse | 3.07 (4.16) | Physical Abuse | 1.9 (2.93) |
| Sexual Abuse | 1.79 (4.12) | Emotional Neglect | 4.75 (4.45) |
| Physical Neglect | 1.75 (2.63) | Anxiety | 13.7 (8.93) |

Results

Inferential Analysis:

Pearson's Correlation:

- Higher levels of childhood maltreatment (physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and emotional and physical neglect) were associated with higher levels of anxiety.

Multiple Linear Regression:

- On average, older White college graduates had significantly less anxiety than other participants among all forms of childhood maltreatment.

| Predictor | B (SE) |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Constant | 19.722 (2.044)*** | 21.910 (2.122)*** | 22.205 (2.033)*** | 18.829 (2.035)*** | 20.900 (2.021)*** |
| Age | -.072 (.027)** | -.097 (.028)*** | -.101 (.027)*** | -.086 (.026)** | -.103 (.027)*** |
| Gender | .915 (.636) | 1.569 (.647)* | .954 (.656) | 1.318 (.623)* | 1.445 (.632)* |
| College graduate | -1.759 (.628)** | -1.967 (.651)** | -2.044 (.638)** | -1.662 (.622)** | -1.652 (.634)** |
| Ethnicity (White) | -3.535 (1.299)** | -3.436 (1.338)* | -3.234 (1.327)* | -3.155 (1.286)* | -3.0 (1.308)* |
| Emotional Abuse | .549 (.078)*** | | | | |
| Physical Abuse | | .285 (.113)* | | | |
| Sexual Abuse | | | .355 (.079)*** | | |
| Emotional Neglect | | | | .571 (.070)*** | |
| Physical Neglect | | | | | .789 (.120)*** |

Reference groups: Male, Not a College Graduate, Not White. ***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05

Conclusion

- Childhood maltreatment has been frequently associated with poor mental health in adults. It was associated with anxiety disorders, such as panic disorder and social phobia (Westermair et al., 2018).
- The current study lacked a representation of people, which was similar to past studies. There is not enough differences in gender or ethnicities. Black and Latinx Americans have higher averages of childhood maltreatment (Sieben et al., 2019).
- The current study corroborated other studies' findings. Childhood maltreatment has lasting adversity that appears to increase anxiety in adulthood. Examining the correlation between specific childhood maltreatment and anxiety helps advance other studies because future studies will know what else to add.



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