

SHORT REPORT

INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD) SYMPTOMS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG ADOLESCENT REFUGEES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

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Abstract

Objective: The objective of this study was to establish the relationship between symptoms of PTSD and various scores of emotional intelligence scales. This study employed a cross-sectional research design. Participants were recruited from the local community health centre in Dearborn, Michigan, USA. The Child Posttraumatic Stress Reaction Index (CPTS-RI) measured the presence of PTSD symptoms and the Adolescents Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (AMEIS) measured emotional intelligence. **Results:** The findings suggest an inverse relationship between PTSD severity and emotional intelligence. The PTSD score was negatively correlated with all AMEIS subscales. Two significant negative correlations were found in the tasks of using emotion and understanding emotion. **Conclusion:** Findings suggest that individuals with severe PTSD symptoms appear to lack the abilities to understand and use emotions. These findings might be useful in identifying factors that may contribute to decreasing the severity of PTSD symptoms of these children. Implications of the findings were discussed, and recommendations for future research are presented. *ASEAN Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 15 (2), July – December 2014: 220-224.*

Keywords: PTSD, Emotional Intelligence, Refugee, Adolescents, Middle East

Introduction

The study of emotional intelligence (EI) is relatively new, having been studied empirically only during the 1990s [1]. Professionals have approached this subject from different perspectives. These include some significant findings from mental health research [2-4]. For example, EI has been found useful in psychological intervention strategies at school [5] and low EI has been linked to behavioral problems such as bullying [3]. EI has also been found to negatively and significantly correlate with depression and maladaptive coping styles among adolescents [4]. In light of correlation between some psychological problems and EI, and the utility of EI in psychological intervention, an

examination of PTSD symptoms and their relationship to EI seems appropriate. The impact of war on children's mental health is devastating. Many have suffered from various form of mental disorders and most of them are diagnosed with PTSD. A majority of adolescents exposed to violence during the Gulf War subsequently suffered PTSD and often depression and anxiety [6-8].

This study was a preliminary investigation of the relationship between EI and PTSD among refugee children and adolescents from the Middle East following war exposure in their native countries. The objective of this study was to identify the relationships between emotional intelligence and the severity of PTSD among the refugee children.