

Pain and emotional processing in psychological trauma.

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Abstract

Extreme psychological and physical traumas cause dramatic symptom patterns which are insufficiently described by the psychiatric diagnostic criteria of post traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). Additionally, due to the neurobiological proximity and similarity of processing mechanisms of physical and psychological pain stimulation and extremely negative emotions, the patients often suffer from persistent pains even after the somatic healing process is completed. Epidemiological studies confirm the joint occurrence of pain and PTSD. The close relationship and the etiological and behavioral similarities of both disorders have led to the development of joined vulnerability and mutual maintenance models. The particular suffering of patients with PTSD due to chronic pain necessitates pain-therapeutic interventions. On the other hand, in chronic pain patients, the etiological role of severe traumas should be considered.

PMID:

20856194

[PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

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