Lifetime traumatic experiences and their impact on PTSD: a general population study.

Abstract:
Exploring the relationship of exposure to a traumatic event and the subsequent onset of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the population. Posttraumatic stress disorder was assessed using the Impact of Event Scale (IES), Posttraumatic Diagnostic Scale (PDS) and interview data. Logistic regression analyses with sex, age, marital status, educational level and traumatic event characteristics were performed. Prevalences were standardised to the sex and age distribution of the German population. A total of 41% of the subjects reported exposure to a trauma, leading to full PTSD in 1.7% and to partial PTSD in 8.8% of the participants. Logistic regression revealed accidents (OR 2.5, 95% CI 1.3-4.7), nonsexual assault by known assailants (4.5, 2.1-9.8), combat/war experiences (5.9, 2.0-17.4), life-threatening illness (4.9, 2.7-8.9) and interpersonal conflicts (15.5, 2.5-96.0) as risk factors for full PTSD; risk factors for partial PTSD were accidents (3.2, 2.4-4.3), sexual (4.6, 2.2-9.6) or nonsexual (2.3, 1.4-3.8) assault by known assailants, life-threatening illness (6.2, 4.6-8.3), death of relatives (5.0, 3.2-7.8) and interpersonal conflicts (22.0, 8.3-58.1). Of subjects exposed to traumatic events, only a minority developed PTSD indicating a relationship between characteristics of the exposure and the individual and the onset of PTSD.