

Childhood sexual abuse in depressed female inpatients : A 2-year follow-up study and an explanatory cognitive model

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The Egyptian Journal of Psychiatry (Print)

2000 v23 n1

The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) on the severity and long-term outcome of depression.

Seventy-five depressed female inpatients, who were admitted for moderate and severe depression during 1997, were prospectively followed up for 24 months. Age ranged from 18 to 49 years. All patients completed Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) (Beck et al, 1961) after one and two years from admission and were clinically assessed by a semi-structured interview on both occasion for DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) axis-I diagnoses. Patients also completed The Social Adjustment Scale, self-reported version (SAS-SR) (Weissman and Bothwell, 1976) on both occasions.

Results: (1) Sexually abused patients have higher rates of suicidal attempts and service utilization, and are more socially maladjusted than non-abused patients. (2) Analysis of depressive symptoms revealed a characteristic negative cognitive set linking child sexual abuse (CSA) to depression in these patients.

Conclusion: Depression is one of the most common sequelae of CSA.

CSA is associated with poor outcome in depressed women and highlights the importance of preventive and early interventive measures of CSA.