Differences in the association between childhood trauma history and borderline personality disorder or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder diagnoses in adulthood.

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Eur Arch Psychiatry Clin Neurosci. 2016 Sep 22. [Epub ahead of print]

Abstract

Common environmental etiological factors between borderline personality disorder (BPD) and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) have not been fully studied. The main aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between childhood trauma histories, assessed by the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form (CTQ-SF), with adult BPD, ADHD or BPD-ADHD diagnoses. Comorbid BPD-ADHD patients exhibited significantly higher clinical severity and higher scores in the Total Neglect Scale, compared to BPD and ADHD patients, and only a marginal difference was observed for Sexual Abuse when BPD and ADHD patients were compared. Physical Trauma Scales were associated with ADHD diagnosis, whereas Emotional Abuse and Sexual Abuse Scales were associated with BPD or BPD-ADHD diagnoses. The study findings support the association between experiencing traumatic events in childhood and a higher clinical severity of BPD in adulthood. Furthermore, physical trauma history in childhood could be associated with the persistence of ADHD in adulthood and emotional or sexual abuse with later development of BPD or comorbid BPD-ADHD. Whereas experiencing childhood traumas is associated with later development of more general psychopathology, our study supports that a specific type of traumatic event could increase the risk for the consolidation of a concrete psychiatric disorder in the trajectory from childhood to adulthood of vulnerable subjects.