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Traumatic Experiences and Mental Health in College Students

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Trauma and Mental Health among College Students

Samantha Sanchez

Introduction

No one escapes trauma; however, some people have long-lasting effects while others manage to sail through life unharmed.

The study’s hypotheses:
1. Does experiencing more traumatic events associated with greater prevalence of depression, anxiety and PTSD?
2. Does experiencing crime and/or physical/sexual displays more symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD than general trauma (accidents, natural disasters, and combat)?
3. Are females are more likely to become victims of sexual assault, while their male counterparts are more likely to have been victims of crime?

Procedure

Participants:
160 college students completed at least part of the survey, ranging in age from 18 to 51 (M=26.21, SD=6.5). Gender information provided: 21 were men and 119 were female.

Materials:
1. Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale (TMAS).
2. Center for Epidemiological Studies—Depression Scale (CES-D).
3. The Posttraumatic Cognitions Inventory—PTSD Scale (PTCI).
4. Trauma History Questionnaire (THQ).
5. Demographic questionnaire.

Method: Survey
Students were recruited from online psychology courses, and were provided with a direct URL to the anonymous survey.

Results

Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TMAS</th>
<th>CES-D</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>World</th>
<th>Self Blame</th>
<th>PTCI</th>
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<td>TMAS</td>
<td>788**</td>
<td>707**</td>
<td>585**</td>
<td>385**</td>
<td>726**</td>
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<tr>
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<td>731**</td>
<td>534**</td>
<td>369**</td>
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<td>Negative Cognitions</td>
<td>Self</td>
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<td>731**</td>
<td>598**</td>
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<td>971**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>534**</td>
<td>598**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-Blame</td>
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<td>396**</td>
<td>540**</td>
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<td>648**</td>
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<td>193**</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>308**</td>
<td>0.065</td>
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<td>Physical/Sexual</td>
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<td>282**</td>
<td>294**</td>
<td>433**</td>
<td>0.087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at the p<.05 level ** Significant at the p<.01 level

Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale (TMAS).
The TMAS (Taylor, 1953) consists of 50 true/false statements, such as “I am troubled by attacks of nausea.”

Center for Epidemiological Studies—Depression Scale (CES-D).
The CES-D (Cole, et al., 2004) consists of 10 statements using a scale from 0=rarely/none to 3=most of the time, such as “I felt my life had been a failure.”

The Posttraumatic Cognitions Inventory—PTSD Scale (PTCI).
The PTCI (Foa, et al., 1999) consists of 36 statements using a scale from 1=disagree to 7=totally agree. The PTSD Score contained three subscales: Negative Cognitions about the Self, Negative Cognitions about the World, and Self Blame.

Trauma History Questionnaire (THQ).
The THQ (Hooper, et al., 2011) consists of 24 yes/no statements. The THQ contains three subscales: Crime Trauma, Disaster Trauma and, Sexual/Physical Trauma.

Discussion

• The results of this study suggests that it is common for college students who experience more traumatic events to display symptoms of mental health disorders.
• These findings suggests physical/sexual trauma, disaster trauma and overall trauma are significant predictors of PTCI symptoms.
• The current finding supported the hypothesis that females would report higher rates of sexual/physical trauma than males.

Materials

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References


