

POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER IN BATTERED WOMEN BY THEIR PARTNERS

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Introduction: Violence gender has caused considerable social alarm. Better awareness of the characteristics and problems of the female victims is necessary to be able to provide adequate psychological attention.

Objectives: To identify the specific characteristics of PTSD in female victims of gender violence, stating what are the symptoms of this disorder are usually present, identify some of the most important variables that characterize women seeking assistance this problem.

Aims: The goal of this study is examining PTSD in battered women.

Methods: Participants: 100 Chilean and 170 Spanish battered women.

Instruments:

- *Semi-structured interview for victims of abuse*: assesses sociodemographic characteristics of victims and circumstances of abuse, it was designed for this research.

- *The PTSD Symptoms Severity Scale* (Echeburúa et al., 1997): assesses the severity and intensity of the symptoms of this disorder according to the diagnostic criteria of the DSM-IV-TR in victims of different traumatic events.

Results: The results show that the most typical symptoms of PTSD are: re-experiencing (the presence of unpleasant and recurring memories about the abuse and psychological and physiological distress on recalling the events); avoidance symptoms (avoidance of thoughts, feelings or conversations related to what has been experienced, loss of interest in significant activities and restriction of emotional life); and hyperactivation symptoms (permanent state of hypervigilance and startle response).

Conclusions: This data will be useful to understand the problems and consequences of abuse and to target interventions to be made to alleviate the plight of these women in cases where it appears PTSD.