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Oral Presentation

"Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder" in Iranian War Veterans' Wives with PTSD

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Abstract

To investigation of secondary traumatic stress disorder in wives of Iranian war veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. 43 wives of Iranian war veterans who had participated in Iran-Iraq war and were diagnosed with PTSD, voluntarily entered in this study. The veterans were treated by psychiatrists of veterans' organization, Tehran, Iran. Each woman completed a short questionnaire to determine socioeconomic data and a modified secondary traumatic questionnaire to appoint the symptoms of secondary traumatic stress. All of 43 women had some symptoms of secondary stress and 54% of them met the diagnostic criteria for secondary traumatic stress disorder. Women who met the criteria had lower education, were married longer and had lower socioeconomic facilities than those who had not the diagnosis. A major group of wives of Iranian war veterans with PTSD suffer of secondary traumatic stress. They have to support and take care of their disabled husbands for many years. Prolonged marital life, lower level of education and poorer economic status can led to severity of stress in veterans wives. So, any treatment program offered to veterans with PTSD must consider the traumatization of their wives. It seems, despite of familial support given by "Iranian organization of war veterans", the wives of veterans need to more attention.

Keywords: PTSD, Secondary traumatic stress, Wives, Iran

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