

P49.02

Mental symptoms in victims of sarin poisoning 5 years after the Tokyo subway attack

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Mental symptoms were evaluated in 34 victims of sarin poisoning 5 years after the Tokyo subway attack (20 males and 14 females; mean age, 43.9 years). Seven victims developed PTSD due to the sarin disaster. Twenty-one victims (61.8 %) showed non-specific mental symptoms (post sarin poisoning mental symptoms: PSPM symptoms), including restlessness and irritability, lack of concentration, diminished interest and apathy, forgetfulness, and lethargy. The score of PSPM symptoms correlated significantly with the severity of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) evaluated with IES-R (Impact of Event Scale revised) and serum cholinesterase level at the disaster. These results indicated that the effects of sarin poisoning last long after the acute intoxication. The symptomatic similarity with those of Gulf war syndrome suggested a common etiology of the two diseases.

P49.03

Longterm effects of traumatic experiences in refugees after World War II

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Background: Expulsion or flight from one's own country due to warfare is a traumatic experience for those afflicted. According to UN data today 22 million people are refugees from war. Empirical data show that a large number of refugees develop PTSD. However, little is known about the outcome of PTSD in later life. Expellees after World War II were examined for somatic and psychological effects of traumatic experiences that date back several decades.

Methods: Via a mailing expellees from former German territories were asked to fill in questionnaires about their somatic (SCL-90-R) and psychic (PTSD-questionnaire) complaints. Clinical interviews were carried out in order to validate the results.

Results: 150 returned questionnaires were analysed. 70% of all participants had experienced symptoms of PTSD during the last month. 10% reached DSM IV criteria of PTSD.

Discussion: We could show that flight and expulsion frequently mean traumatic experience to those afflicted. We could also demonstrate that without adequate therapy, trauma related symptoms may last for more than fifty years. The study indicates the necessity of adequate care for expellees and other psychologically traumatised people.

P49.04

Prophylaxis by mexidol of the behavior disturbances after sound stress

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The ultrasonic signals have the large meaning in the life of mammal, in particular rats. It is known that among Wistar rats 40–60% of the individuals gave the audiogenic seizures (AS) as a result of compound sound stimulus (CSS) with ultrasonic components (from 13 till 85 kHz) influence. The purpose of this work was to investigate the influence of CSS on higher nervous activity

and synaptic transfer in Wistar rats with and without AS. Some experiments were performed on antioxidant mexidol background.

It is shown that the presentation of CSS within 90 sec only is a powerful stressor for Wistar rats. It breaks the rat behavior in "open field", inhibits or disturbs the elaboration of the defense conditioned reflex to ton in shuttle box, food reflexes to ton and to time at least within 7 days. This effect does not depend on presence AS at rats. Analysis of redistribution of the vesicles in synapses of hippocampus in one day after CSS has shown that synaptic transfer is destroying too. All this changes are not developed on the mexidol background.

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P49.05

A psychosocial model of posttraumatic stress after childbirth

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The aim of this presentation is to suggest a theoretical model for psychological distress after childbirth. According to DSM-IV, criteria A for PTSD indicate that the stressor must involve direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to physical integrity of self or others. The response includes intense fear, helplessness and horror. In spite of the normative occurrence of childbirth, certain women may experience the birth as a traumatic event, as it sometimes poses a threat to their life or their infants and might include feeling of intense fear etc. The purpose of the model is to predict posttraumatic symptoms following childbirth in a multidimensional prospective framework. The model includes pre and post-natal variables; personality characteristics, perceived social support, posttraumatic and depressive symptoms. It is implied that women after traumatic childbirth often are diagnosed incorrectly as suffering from postpartum symptoms, when in fact, some of them suffer from posttraumatic symptoms. This model may assist in improving correct diagnosis of psychological distress after traumatic childbirth.

P49.06

Previous trauma, personality dimensions and psychological symptoms after a stressful event

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Various factors determine individual reaction to a stressful event and psychological consequences on individuals' mental health. The objective of our study was to assess the previous trauma, personality dimensions and current symptoms after a stressful life event (air attacks). The assessment procedure consisted of the following instruments – Life Stressor Checklist, Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory, Impact of Events Scale and List of stressors. 107 medical students from the University of Belgrade that have experienced air attacks during 1999 were included in the study which was carried out nine months after the attacks. Our results stress the importance of personality organisation as a protective or risk factor in development of stress-related mental disorders. The interaction effect of personality dimensions with both previous and recent type of stressful event is also important in determining