



Emotion Regulation Difficulties, Aggression, and PTSD Symptoms in Danish Treatment-Seeking Veterans

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

While empirical research on understanding the risk factors and comorbidities of PTSD and complex PTSD (CPTSD) in veteran populations is growing, few studies have investigated emotion regulation (ER) difficulties and aggression in this population. This study seeks to investigate the prevalence and risk factors of PTSD and CPTSD among Danish treatment-seeking veterans. Specifically, the study aims to examine the relationship between posttraumatic symptoms, ER difficulties, and aggression in veterans, and identify potential demographic and trauma-related risk factors as set out in the World Health Organization's ICD-11 classifications.¹ A sample of 142 Danish war veterans from a highly specialized trauma treatment unit participated by completing the International Trauma Questionnaire (ITQ) and questionnaires on symptomatology, trauma experiences, and medication. Hierarchical multiple linear regression analyses were employed to explore the predictability and explanatory power of independent variables significantly associated with posttraumatic symptoms. A total of 29.8% met the criteria of probable PTSD, while 56.0% met the criteria of probable CPTSD. Clinically relevant scores were reported in emotion dysregulation and posttraumatic symptoms, along with low levels of aggressive behavior. Notably, aspects of ER (Non-acceptance, Impulse, and Strategies), Somatization, and persistent Dissociation emerged as the strongest contributors to perceived PTSD symptoms. Similarly, ER Strategies, Somatization, and perceived lack of social support had the most significant individual impact on perceived CPTSD symptoms. This research supports existing literature indicating a higher prevalence of CPTSD than PTSD among treatment-seeking veterans, emphasizing challenges with dissociation, somatization, absence of social support, and difficulties in ER.

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