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Trauma and personality disorders in Danish treatment-seeking veterans

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ABSTRACT

Background & objectives: 50.000 Danish soldiers have been deployed abroad during the last three decades. A recent study reported that 24 % were registered with either a psychiatric diagnosis or receiving psychotropic medication. We want 1) to explore the relationship between ICD-11 PTSD and complex PTSD (CPTSD), and severe personality pathology as well as clinical syndromes, and 2) to assess the mediating impact of social support, secondary trauma symptoms, and aggression for the two trauma diagnoses.

Method: 142 male war veterans were assessed at intake to the outpatient services of a specialized trauma treatment facility. The participants completed an assessment battery. In addition to descriptive statistics, two multiple regression analyses were performed: one for PTSD and one for CPTSD.

Results: While less than half of the personality disorders and the clinical syndromes were associated with PTSD, almost all personality disorders and all the clinical syndromes were associated with CPTSD and to a much higher degree. 52 % of the variation of PTSD could be explained in the regression analysis with three significant factors in the final model: Anxiety, schizotypal personality disorder, and dissociation. In the similar analysis for CPTSD, 61 % of the variation was explained in the final model with Avoidant personality disorder and Negative Affectivity as significant factors. Social support and aggression were not significant predictors in either analysis.

Conclusion: The study supports the more severe sequelae associated with CPTSD compared to PTSD. The relationships between trauma disorders and personality pathology deserve more attention to inform the treatment of veterans.