



Trauma and Mental Health during the Global Pandemic

Abstract Book of the ESTSS 2021 Virtual Conference Editors: Annett Lotzin, A.A.A. Manik J. Djelantik, Marloes B. Eidhof, Anke de Haan, & Jana Kiralj

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Abstract Book of the ESTSS 2021 Virtual Conference

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Thursday, June 17th, 2021

Day #1

Parallel sessions #1

10:45–11:45

SYMPOSIUM

S1.1

The ESTSS pan-European COVID-19 ADJUST study on stressors, risk and resilience factors, and symptoms of adjustment disorder – Study design and first results from eleven countries

Chair: Evaldas Kazlauskas

Vilnius University, Lithuania

Track: Trauma and stress

The European Society for Traumatic Studies (ESTSS) launched a longitudinal pan-European study on the mental health impact of the current pandemic. The study aims to assess risk and resilience factors of mental health, COVID-19-related stressors, and coping with these stressors across Europe. Findings from the first wave of the ESTSS study on the mental health effects of the pandemic in eleven European countries in more than 15,000 participants will be presented in this symposium. The first presentation (Lotzin et al.) of this symposium will examine relationships between COVID-19-related stressors, risk and resilience factors, and symptoms of adjustment disorder, which will provide insights into the relative importance of different risk and resilience factors for mental health. The second presentation (Lenferink et al.) of this symposium will present distinct mental health profiles identified using latent class analysis, revealing the importance of resilience and wellbeing in understanding the effects of the pandemic. The last presentation (Zrnica et al.) will complement quantitative study findings by focusing on qualitative data analysis of personal experiences amid the pandemic in three countries (Austria, Georgia, and Portugal), highlighting both positive and negative

pandemic-related thoughts and emotions. Implications for research and clinical practice of the study findings will be discussed.

The ESTSS pan-European COVID-19 cohort study on stressors, risk and resilience factors, and symptoms of adjustment disorder – Study design and first results from eleven countries

Annett Lotzin^a, Elena Acquarini^b, Marina Ajduković^c, Vittoria Ardino^b, Filip Arnberg^d, Helena Bakic^c, Maria Böttche^e, Maria Bragesjö^f, Malgorzata Dragan^g, Margarida Figueiredo-Braga^{h,i}, Odeta Gelezelyte^j, Piotr Grajewski^g, Xenia Hadjicharalambous^k, Jana Darejan Javakhishvili^l, Evaldas Kazlauskas^j, Chrysanthy Lioupi^k, Brigitte Lueger-Schuster^m, Nino Makhashvili^l, Trudy Moorenⁿ, Luisa Salesⁱ, Irina Zrnica^m, Ingo Schäfer^a

^aUniversity Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Germany; ^bUniversity of Urbino, Italy; ^cUniversity of Zagreb, Croatia; ^dUppsala University, Sweden; ^eFreie Universität Berlin, Germany; ^fKarolinska Institutet, Sweden; ^gUniversity of Warsaw; ^hUniversity of Porto, Portugal; ⁱUniversity of Coimbra, Portugal; ^jVilnius University, Lithuania; ^kUniversity of Nicosia, Cyprus; ^lIliia State University, Georgia; ^mUniversity of Vienna, Austria; ⁿUtrecht University, The Netherlands

Background: This presentation will provide an overview of the ESTSS COVID-19 cohort study that examines relationships between COVID-related stressors, risk and resilience factors, and symptoms of adjustment disorder during the current pandemic. *Objective:* The first cross-sectional results of the study will be presented. *Method:* This longitudinal study is conducted in eleven countries (Austria, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and Sweden). Participants aged at least 18 years were included in this study and are assessed at two-time points, with a six-month interval using an online survey. A COVID-19 conceptual framework of mental health based on the WHO's framework of health was used to select stressors, risk, and resilience factors that might be related to symptoms of adjustment disorder (ADNM-8), or posttraumatic stress disorder (PC-PTSD-5), respectively. Risk or resilience factors (e.g., age, gender, income, work situation, health condition) are assessed by self-constructed

items. Stressors (e.g., crisis communication, fear of contracting COVID-19, restricted physical contact) are measured by four-point rating scales (0 = not at all burdened to 3 = strongly burdened). *Results:* $N = 15,564$ participants were included in the study. A preliminary cross-sectional regression analysis indicated that risk and resilience factors, such as income, a diagnosis of a mental disorder, and a poor health condition, showed small to moderate associations with symptoms of adjustment disorder. Stressors that are unique to the pandemic, such as poor crisis communication, restricted physical contact, and work-related problems, were also related to symptoms of adjustment disorder. *Conclusions:* Recommendations to promote mental health during the current COVID-19 pandemic will be discussed.

Latent classes of posttraumatic stress disorder, adjustment disorder, and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic in over 10,000 people across 11 European countries

Lonneke I.M. Lenferink^a, Joanne Mouthaan^b, Suzan Soydas^a, Trudy Mooren^a, Annett Lotzin^c, Elena Acquarini^d, Dean Ajdukovic^e, Vittoria Ardino^d, Filip Arnberg^f, Maria Böttche^g, Maria Bragesjö^h, Małgorzata Draganⁱ, Margarida Figueiredo-Braga^{j,k}, Odeta Gelezelyte^l, Piotr Grajewskiⁱ, Xenia Hadjicharalambous^m, Jana Darejan Javakhishviliⁿ, Evaldas Kazlauskas^l, Chrysanthi Lioupi^m, Brigitte Lueger-Schuster^o, Nino Makhashviliⁿ, Luisa Sales^k, Irina Zrnic^o, Aleksandra Stevanovic^p, Ingo Schäfer^c

^aUtrecht University, The Netherlands; ^bLeiden University, The Netherlands; ^cUniversity Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Germany; ^dUniversity of Urbino, Italy; ^eUniversity of Zagreb, Croatia; ^fUppsala University, Sweden; ^gFreie Universität Berlin, Germany; ^hKarolinska Institutet, Sweden; ⁱUniversity of Warsaw, Poland; ^jUniversity of Porto, Portugal; ^kUniversity of Coimbra, Portugal; ^lVilnius University, Lithuania; ^mUniversity of Nicosia, Cyprus; ⁿIliia State University, Georgia; ^oUniversity of Vienna, Austria; ^pUniversity of Rijeka, Croatia

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has a significant psychological health impact globally. A minority may experience negative psychological outcomes, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and adjustment disorder (AD) symptoms, while others experience positive outcomes, such as increases in wellbeing. Examining individual differences in negative and positive outcomes and correlates thereof provides knowledge on people at risk for developing long-term psychological impairment, which may optimize care for the most vulnerable people. *Objective:* The aim of this study is to examine (correlates of) symptom-profiles of PTSD, AD, and wellbeing in 14,505 European people within the first months of the pandemic. *Method:* Across 11 European countries, an online survey-study was conducted initiated by the ESTSS (ADJUST study). PTSD (PC-PTSD), AD (ADNM-8), and wellbeing (WHO Wellbeing Index) symptom-profiles were examined using latent class analyses. Correlates of class-membership (e.g., background and pandemic-related characteristics and adverse childhood experiences) were examined using a 3-step approach. *Results:* Six classes were identified: 1) Low

PTSD/Low AD/High wellbeing (36%), 2) Low PTSD/Low AD/Moderate wellbeing (17%), 3) Moderate PTSD/Moderate AD/High wellbeing (14%), 4) Moderate PTSD/High AD/Low wellbeing (12%), 5) High PTSD/Moderate AD/Moderate Wellbeing (11%), and 6) High PTSD/High AD/Moderate wellbeing (9%). Correlates of classes will be presented at the conference. *Conclusions:* Six symptom-profiles of PTSD, AD, and wellbeing were found. The most common response to the pandemic was the absence of PTSD/AD symptoms and high wellbeing. Our findings reveal that the presence of PTSD/AD symptoms does not always co-occur with the absence of wellbeing. Taking wellbeing into account when examining post-pandemic distress, therefore, seems important.

Feelings, thoughts and challenges amidst the COVID-19 pandemic – A qualitative approach

Irina Zrnic^a, Brigitte Lueger-Schuster^b, Margarida Figueiredo-Braga^{c,d}, Luísa Sales^{c,e}, Jana Darejan Javakhishvili^f, Lela Tsiskarishvili^f, Annett Lotzin^g

^aFaculty of Psychology, Austria; ^bUniversity of Vienna, Austria; ^cUniversity of Coimbra, Portugal; ^dUniversity of Porto, Portugal; ^eMilitary Hospital, Portugal; ^fIliia State University, Georgia; ^gUniversity Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Germany

Background: The complex system of stressors related to the COVID-19 pandemic in combination with a worldwide regime of preventive measures affect people worldwide in multiple ways provoking a broad range of psychological reactions. *Objective:* This study aims to explore diverse experiences, reactions, feelings, and thoughts across three countries, by applying a qualitative approach to highlight various mechanisms to adapt to the challenges. *Method:* The sample was part of the ESTSS pan-European study. Austrian, Georgian, and Portuguese participants who completed sociodemographic information and responded to the open-ended questions at the baseline assessment were included in the present study (Austria: $N = 798$; Georgia: $N = 722$; Portugal: $N = 982$). The overall sample was dominated by women, constituting between 63.3% and 81.6% of the participants. Age ranged from 18 to 82 years, with means between $M = 36$ ($SD = 14$) up to $M = 46.6$ ($SD = 12.6$). The open-ended questions regarding straining events, positive and negative aspects of the pandemic, and recommendations to deal with the current situation are analysed using qualitative content analysis. MAXQDA software is used to sort and organise the data. *Results:* Inductively developed categories and supporting quotes will be presented. *Conclusions:* The variety of answers will reflect the diversity within the participants from three countries, considering different confinement measures as well as different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds forming the participants' responses.