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# Notes From the Field: Delivering Trauma and Disaster Mental Health Services in Dangerous Places

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# 2014 ANNUAL CONVENTION

August 7-10 2014 ★ Washington, DC

## Notes From the Field: Delivering Trauma and Disaster Mental Health Services in Dangerous Places

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# Abstract

The second presentation will describe findings from a series of empirical studies conducted in zones of persistent and cumulative exposure to traumatic stress. The zones under examination include Sri Lanka, India, Sudan, Haiti, Japan, and the West Bank of the Jordan River. The findings are discussed in terms their implications for public health (both “physical” and “mental”), spiritual and emotional well-being, and the reciprocal influences of culture and traumatic experiences.

## Method

This study examined the experience of trauma in six international samples who were assessed in their home countries following significant traumatic events. Participants included two groups from Haiti, a group from India, a group from the South Sudan, and a group from the West Bank of Israel. In addition was a group of trauma workers in Japan.

Participants completed a demographic questionnaire with items on age, education, and gender. They also completed the Cumulative Trauma Scale, the Impact for Events Scale-Revised and the Dissociative Experiences Scale-Taxon items.

## **Cumulative Trauma Scale**

The Cumulative Trauma Scale (CTS) is a twenty-two item measure of the different types of traumatic events the participant has experienced throughout his/her lifetime (Kira, Fawzi, & Fawzi, 2008). It is a short form (Developed by Rhoades) of a sixty item measure developed by Kira (Kira, 2001). Items are responded to with a Yes or No. Kira et al reported an alpha internal consistency of .85. They found six factors measuring collective identity trauma, family trauma, secondary trauma, personal identity/autonomy trauma, and attachment trauma.

# Impact of Events Scale-Revised

The Impact of Events Scale-Revised (IES-R) is a 20-item scale that assesses the level of distress a person has experienced in response to a traumatic event (Weiss & Marmar, 1997).

The Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R) was constructed in 1979 as a subjective measure of intrusion and avoidance after experiencing trauma (Horowitz, Wilner, & Alvarez, 1979).

The IES-R utilizes a five point Likert scale as a measure of distress, with a response range of 0 “not at all” to 4 “extremely.”

# **Dissociative Experiences Scale-Taxon Items**

**Dissociative Experience Scale (DES)** is a self-report measure of dissociative experiences due to exposure to a traumatic events. It was developed by Bernstein and Putnam (1986), and consisted of 28 items that measured a variety of dissociative experiences.

The participants answer the questions on a continuum of never (0%) to always (100%). The eight taxon items (DES-3, DES-5, DES-7, DES-8, DES-12, DES-13, DES-22, and DES-27) were used for this study (Ruiz, Poythress, Lillienfeld, & Douglas, 2008).

## Participants: AGE

<b>Total sample</b>	Mean = 33.01	SD = 10.66	N = 229
<b>Sudan</b>	Mean = 36.77	SD = 10.80	N = 31
<b>West Bank</b>	Mean = 34.88	SD = 12.23	N = 24
<b>Haiti B</b>	Mean = 29.35	SD = 9.27	N = 82
<b>Haiti C</b>	Mean = 33.26	SD = 7.77	N = 50
<b>India</b>	Mean = 39.15	SD = 13.37	N = 27
<b>Japan</b>	Mean = 29.42	SD = 11.45	N = 12

# Gender

- **Total:**

Female = 109  
52.4%

Male = 99  
47.6%

Missing = 113

- **Sudan**

Female = 9 29 %

Male = 22 71%

- **West Bank**

Female = 12 52%

Male = 11 48%

- **Haiti B**

Female = 44 64%

Male = 25 36%

- **Haiti C**

Female = 17 39%

Male = 27 61%

- **India**

Female = 19 73%

Male = 7 27%

- **Japan**

Female = 7 58%

Male = 5 42%

## Table 1: Education

• <b>Sample</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
• Haiti B	53	13.73	5.80
• Haiti C	30	14.87	2.66
• India	25	13.24	3.49
• Japan	11	14.18	4.77
• South Sudan	27	9.96	3.75
• West Bank	18	17.06	5.66
• Total	164	13.64	4.96

# Correlations between IES-R & DES-T

IES-R and DES-T correlated  $r = .50$  ( $p < .01$ ). Interestingly, the CTS-Human and CTS-Natural scores correlated with the CTS total score  $r = .93$  and  $r = .60$  respectively.

## Correlations between Scales & Age & Gender

Additional correlations were computed among the scales and for age and gender with the scales. Results showed that age was not significantly correlated with scores on the CTS, IESR or DES-T. However, a significant correlation was found between gender and CTS scores ( $r = .270^{**}$ ), but not IESR or DES-T scores (see Table 1).

## Correlations between Scales

The CTS showed only moderate correlations with IESR and DES-T ( $r = .331^{**}$  and  $.218^{**}$  respectively), suggesting that the degree of trauma reported was only moderately related to the traumatic symptoms that participants manifested. The correlation between the IESR and the DES-T was moderately strong ( $r = .504^{**}$ ), suggesting that these scales are measure related but distinct constructs.

# Gender: Degree & Impact of Trauma

First, the significant correlation of gender with the CTS suggested that men and women experienced different amounts of trauma in this sample . Analyses of variance revealed that men in the present sample reported a greater degree of trauma and were more variable in their responses on the CTS than women, but reported similar levels of symptoms and dissociation. Thus men in the present sample report a lesser degree of impact of trauma than women. We are unable to assess whether trauma affects men less or they are merely less prone to report the effects from these data.

# Gender: Degree & Impact of Trauma

This does not seem surprising, as women are often less involved in warfare, but may more commonly be exposed to abuse of various kinds and may share similar degrees of natural trauma. Interestingly, gender was not related to the impact of trauma as measured by total scores on the Impact of Events Scale, Revised or by the Dissociate Experiences Scale-Taxon Version. Thus it appears that men and women undergo different forms of trauma but manifest the similar degrees of trauma and dissociation. Further study should explore whether the forms of trauma and dissociation also differ among men and women.

# Groups: Natural & Human-Induced Trauma

When comparing the levels of naturally- and human-induced trauma, we were surprised to learn that the Sudanese participants scored one and one half to two and one half standard deviations higher than most other participants on both forms of trauma. The level of trauma in the Sudan is enormous. Somewhat differently, those in the West Bank scored over one and one half standard deviations higher on human-induced trauma than those in Haiti and Japan, but score lower by one half to three quarters of a standard deviation on naturally-induced trauma. This latter finding is what we had expected. It suggests that those in the West Bank may be traumatized in different ways than those in the Sudan although their scores on the CTS as a whole did not differ significantly.

# **Sensitivity to Both Types of Trauma Needed**

Further, natural- and human-induced trauma occurred together in our samples. The highest scores for both were for the Sudan participants.

These findings suggest that it may be essential to work in a common setting to sensitively explore the relative impact of these two forms of trauma.

# Sudan

- Trauma Trainings for community leaders.
- Practical Application of Trauma Counseling in IDP Camps.
- Woman Crying, preparing for suicide of family.
- Man intervenes in family/village crises over death of three year old child.

# Sri Lanka

- “Don’t talk to me about Counseling”
- Access to IDP camps.
- Grandfather’s comment, “Why not me” and issue of survivor’s guilt.
- Advice to the Department of Health to allow for burial and memorial rituals.

# India

- 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizens- Women
- 3<sup>rd</sup> class citizens- Orphans
- 4<sup>th</sup> class citizens- Handicapped
- 5<sup>th</sup> class citizens- Christians
- Rap Sessions to address various issues of concern.

# West Bank/Gaza

- Assassination of Christian Missionary.
- Gaza Bombing by Israel
- Trauma trainings/counseling
- “What do I tell my 8 year old son?”
  - Delays at checkpoints for hours as I am Palestinian.
  - Shot in the foot by Israeli Border Guard

# Haiti

- Poorest Country in the American Hemisphere
- Earth quake killed over 300,000, one factor due to poor workmanship of concrete construction.
- “When America sneezes, Haiti develops a cold.”

# Japan

- “Only those that can speak Japanese can do counseling!”
- Outreach into the neighborhoods of Ishinomaki and Group Trauma sessions.
- Trauma Counseling Trainings and “Conversational Trauma Counseling.”
- Mobile Cafes



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