



NEWS

The War in Ukraine and Indirect Traumatization in the Czech Republic

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1. Introduction

Posttraumatic stress disorder

The prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is higher in war veterans than in the general population. In addition to factors directly related to combat and disasters, risk factors for PTSD include childhood trauma female gender, ethnic minority, stigmatization, and stressful life events in the recent past (Inoue et al., 2022). Manifestations of PTSD include recurrent memories of the event in question, avoidance of what the event commemorates, self-deprecation, feelings of helplessness and guilt, depressive symptoms, memory impairment and emotional and relational problems. Also sleep disturbances, fear, increased irritability, symptoms of stress, suicidal tendencies, self-aggressive behaviour, alcohol or drug abuse, etc. occur.

Indirect traumatisatation

PTSD and other psychological disorders can occur due to the influence of audiovisual media even in areas not directly affected by war events, natural disasters, etc. (Ahern et al. 2004, Lee et al., 2016, Hall et al., 2019, Pe'er and Slone, 2022). This naturally applies to the war in Ukraine and the Czech population.

2. Prevention of indirect traumatization

- A logical strategy is to limit the time devoted to stressful media content. Audiovisual media are the riskiest in this respect. The author of this article does not use television and has turned off the displaying of illustrations on his preferred news website. Hall et al. (2019) state that information about victims and the emotional reactions of those affected have a particularly negative impact.
- In preventing secondary traumatization, Pe'er and Slone (2022) recommend training skills that are related to self-regulation. This includes, for example, relaxation techniques (recordings freely available at www.drnespor.eu), breathwork, or the ability to confide and ask for help.
- Support from those around you and a functioning network of social relationships are also helpful.
- Optimal sleep duration and quality also increase non-specific resilience. Warnings should be given against watching stressful media content at night and shortly before bedtime. Sleep quality is significantly impaired by alcohol consumption and use of other addictive substances.
- Avoiding alcohol, drugs and gambling is important in itself, because they tend to be stressful, reduce non-specific resilience and are also the cause of stressful life events.

- In the prevention of PTSD, it is advisable to divert attention from catastrophic fantasies to reality, the real surroundings, one's situation and normal duties.
- Other methods used to prevent and manage stress can also be recommended and have been discussed in more detail elsewhere (Nešpor 2016, 2019). These include, among others, adequate physical activity (walking, yoga, qigong etc.), regularity and good time management, spirituality, laughter and humor, or healthy emotions.

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