

PTSD and Depression 8 Years After the 2004 Tsunami in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Objectives: To evaluate prevalence and risk factors of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression among directly exposed (DE) and indirectly or nonexposed (INE) populations in Sri Lanka 8 y after the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004.

Methods: Population-based structured survey study was conducted among Sri Lankan adults living in 5 coastal districts, Hambanthissa, Matara, Galle, Kalutara, and Colombo in 2012-2013. A total of 430 individuals, 325 in DE, 105 in INE, participated in the survey. DE and INE groups were compared for demographics and outcomes. Bivariate and multiple logistic regressions with backward selection were used to identify risk factors for partial PTSD and depression.

Results: The prevalence of PTSD, partial PTSD and depression were 2.8%, 10.5%, and 18.8% in DE group, respectively. In multivariable analyses tsunami exposure, female gender, subjective physical health before the tsunami, previous trauma, and depression were significantly associated with partial PTSD. Female gender, high frequency of religious activity, previous trauma, social support, and PTSD were significantly associated with depression.

Conclusions: The psychological impacts of the tsunami did wane over time, but still present at lower rate even in 8 y. It is important to address these lingering sequelae and expand access to at risk individuals.

Keywords: Sri Lanka; Trauma; depression; posttraumatic stress disorder; tsunami.