Combining biofeedback and Narrative Exposure Therapy for persistent pain and PTSD in refugees: a pilot study

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Abstract: OBJECTIVE: Many traumatised refugees suffer from both persistent pain and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). To date, no specific guidelines exist for treatment of this group of patients. This paper presents data on a pilot treatment study conducted with 15 traumatised refugees with persistent pain and PTSD. METHODS: Participants received 10 sessions of pain-focused treatment with biofeedback (BF) followed by 10 sessions of Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET). Structured interviews and standardised questionnaires were used to assess symptoms of pain intensity, pain disability, PTSD and quality of life directly before and after treatment and at 3 months follow-up. RESULTS: Following the combined intervention, participants showed a significant reduction in both pain and PTSD symptoms, as well as improved quality of life. Additionally, biofeedback increased motivation for subsequent trauma-focused therapy, which in turn was related to larger PTSD treatment gains. CONCLUSION: This pilot study provides initial evidence that combining BF and NET is safe, acceptable, and feasible in patients with co-morbid persistent pain and PTSD.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v3i0.17660

Posted at the Zurich Open Repository and Archive, University of Zurich
ZORA URL: https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-64348

Originally published at:
Morina, Naser; Maier, Thomas; Bryant, Richard; Knaevelsrud, Christine; Wittmann, Lutz; Rufer, Michael; Schnyder, Ulrich; Müller, Julia (2012). Combining biofeedback and Narrative Exposure Therapy for persistent pain and PTSD in refugees: a pilot study. European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 3:17660. THIS ARTICLE HAS BEEN RETRACTED.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v3i0.17660
Retraction: Combining biofeedback and Narrative Exposure Therapy for persistent pain and PTSD in refugees: a pilot study.

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The following article has been retracted by the authors due to irregularities they had found regarding compliance with study procedures and data management. Data files comprising details of participants that were not de-identified were sent between study sites. At the Zurich study site, research sessions and interpreter costs were partly charged to the insurance companies and the hospital rather than to the appropriate research account. Data quality, data analyses, and clinical conclusions drawn from the results were not affected.

June 30, 2013
On behalf of the authors
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