SEVERITY OF MALTREATMENT AND PERSONALITY PATHOLOGY IN ADOLESCENTS OF JAMMU, INDIA: A LATENT CLASS APPROACH

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Introduction

- Severity within each type of abuse/neglect, has been reported to be the best predictor of psychopathology in children/adolescents when compared with other indices (e.g., maximum severity across subtypes; Litrownik et al., 2003).
- Combined effect of types of maltreatment and their severity, in relation to specific outcomes of adolescent psychopathology has scarcely been addressed (e.g., English et al., 2005).
- The phenomenon of experience of multiple types of maltreatment has recently been investigated with preference for person-centered analytic models (e.g., Latent Class Profile Analysis) over variable-centered models for assessment (Browne et al., 2010).
- Experiences of maltreatment have been associated with less adaptive personality traits in children (Stodolsky et al., 2010), which tend to persist over time (Rogosch & Cicchetti, 2004).
- Gender differences have been found on dimensions of personality pathology (using the DAPP-BQA-A) with girls scoring higher on internalizing personality pathology including submissiveness, cognitive dysregulation, autonomy problems, affective lability, anxiety, low affiliation, insecure attachment, and compulsivity, and boys scoring higher on externalizing personality traits (e.g., stimulation seeking, callousness, conduct problems; Tromp & Koot, 2009). It was hypothesized that (i) mutually exclusive groups would be identified based on reported maltreatment (e.g., Noumer et al., 2009), (ii) males would display more dissociative/externalizing personality pathology (e.g., conduct problems), and females would score higher on emotion dysregulation/internalizing personality pathology, (iii) the more types of maltreatment the adolescents have been exposed to and the more severe this exposure, the more symptoms of personality pathology would be reported, and (iv) it was explored whether experiences of severity of abuse and neglect would have a gender-differential effect on the dimensions of personality pathology.

Method

Participants
- The study comprised of 702 adolescents in the age range of 13-17 years (M = 15.2, SD = 1.5, 41.5% females) from Jammu, India. The study was conducted in class-room settings in schools with English as a medium of communication and teaching.
- The study was conducted in line with the ethical guidelines laid down by VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands where it was designed and analysed.

Measures
- Childhood trauma questionnaire (CTQ; Bernstein & Fink, 1998): It consists of 25 self-report items measuring emotional, physical, sexual abuse, and emotional and physical neglect. Cut-off scores were used to make categories of minimal, low, and moderate-severe levels of abuse or neglect.
- Dimensional assessment of personality pathology-short form for adolescents (DAPP-BQA; Tromp & Koot, 2008, 2004). It has 136 item questionnaire for assessment across the five dimensions of personality pathology.
- Basic Questionnaire (DAPP): It has 136 item questionnaire-
- A) with girls scoring higher on...