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Somatization and PTSD in child sexual abuse

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Purpose: Somatization is a major post-traumatic symptom in the sexually abused children. The aims of this study were 1) to find the relation between somatizations and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms in child sexually abused victims and 2) to elucidate whether type of abuse have effect on somatization.

Methods: Sixty-three victims were evaluated of their somatizations (Child behavioral checklist), PTSD symptoms (trauma symptom checklist for children, TSCC), and level of intelligence. The correlation and regression analyses were calculated to predict somatization based on the PTSD symptom, intelligence score, age, and the type of sexual abuse.

Results: The result showed that factors associated with somatization in the sexual abuse victims were PTSD symptoms ($B=0.356$, $p=0.001$) and intelligence ($B=0.179$, $p=0.019$). The type of abuse by itself did not correlate somatization ($B=3.027$, $p=0.310$), but had moderating effect of PTSD symptoms on somatization (Type of abuse PTSD symptoms, $B=-.489$, $p=0.036$). PTSD symptoms were associated with somatization only in victims with the molestation type of abuse.

Conclusions: Somatization of the sexually abused victims was influenced by the severity of PTSD symptoms and intelligence. The effect of the PTSD symptoms on somatization was mediated by the type of abuse. The rape type of abuse might be a powerful predisposing factor which attenuates the effect of post-traumatic symptoms on somatization.

Biography

Seung Min Bae completed a Psychiatric Training and Child Psychiatry Fellowship at Kangbuk Samsung Hospital. Since 2009, she has been a Psychiatric Assistant Professor at Gachon University and Director of Incheon Sunflower Center for Sexually Abused Children and is currently the Head of the Support Center for victims of crime in the ministry of justice. She is a non-standing Director of the Korea Women's Development Agency under the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family.

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