

INMATES TRAUMA AND DISSOCIATION

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Trauma and dissociation have been shown to be prevalent among inmate population. However, despite the high rate of traumatic experiences in this population, few studies have aimed on potential links between traumatic experiences and dissociation, specially considering the types of crime.

This study sought to examine the severity of dissociative and traumatic experiences, as well as relationships between types of crime, types of trauma, and dissociation.

Twenty-nine inmates (mean age = 37.8 ± 10.0) were examined using the Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES) and the Traumatic Experiences Checklist (TEC), 12 committed property crimes and 17 crimes against people. A crime severity index (CSI) included sentence length, plus number of crimes, number of sentences, multiplied by type of crime (property crimes = 1; crimes against the person = 2). Two groups were created based on CSI mean plus one standard deviation ($25.95 + 16.61$): "severe crime" (17.2%), and "moderated serious crime" (82.8%).

In total sample, the intensity of traumatic (7.36 ± 3.74) and dissociative (16.70 ± 14.6) experiences were high comparing with a study with a general sample ($p < 0.05$). Types of crimes were not associated with trauma or dissociation. Physical abuse and trauma with body threat were significantly linked to high levels of dissociation.

In conclusion, traumatic and dissociative experiences are severe in inmate population. Dissociative experiences in inmates are specially linked to trauma with physical abuse and with body threat. Type of crime is not associated with trauma or dissociation.