

Categories: Language and Speech Functions/Aphasia

Keyword 1: language: second/foreign

Keyword 2: bilingualism/multilingualism

Keyword 3: naming

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69 Verbal Comprehension and PTSD: A Glimpse into Trauma and Resilience

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Objective: Many of those who experience the trauma and abuse of sex trafficking also struggle with a variety of physical and mental health issues, a major one of those issues being posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In this study, we explored the relationship between verbal comprehension and a PTSD diagnosis to see if this aspect of intelligence might be stronger for individuals without a diagnosis of PTSD.

Participants and Methods: Participants included 22 adolescent girls between the ages of 14 and 18 who had experienced sex trafficking. Participants were referred to Fuller Psychological and Family Services for learning difficulties, where they were given comprehensive clinical neuropsychological evaluations, including a Wechsler Intelligence Scale (WISC or WAIS) and a screening for PTSD. WISC or WAIS Full Scale IQ ranged from 75 to 115 ($M = 85.1$, $SD = 11.2$).

Results: Contrary to the hypothesis that those without PTSD would have higher verbal comprehension scores than those with PTSD, the results indicated no difference between the two groups, $t(23) = -.86$, $p = .40$. However, verbal comprehension scores across both groups were significantly below the normal range, suggesting a relationship between trauma and verbal comprehension.

Conclusions: The diagnosis of PTSD may impact intelligence in ways not anticipated for this population, or perhaps our method of diagnosing PTSD did not adequately nuance the varying responses to trauma. By further exploring the relationships between Verbal

Comprehension Indexes and markers of resilience, we may be able to better understand the characteristics of resilience demonstrated by those who become involved in prostitution.

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Keyword 1: post-traumatic stress disorder

Keyword 2: verbal abilities

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70 The Effect of Executive Functioning on Predicting Health Literacy in a Memory Disorders Clinic

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Objective: Health literacy is the degree to which an individual is able to attain, process, and understand information, skills, and services required to make informed decisions. Limited health literacy is a risk factor for problems understanding health information and adhering to medical instructions, underuse of preventive services, increased hospitalizations and associated medical costs, and higher mortality rates. Recognizing individuals with reduced health literacy can be difficult given demographic information such as age or years of education do not reliably reflect an individual's health literacy level. Cross-sectional studies have identified limited health literacy as associated with lower scores on cognitive tests measuring memory, executive function (EF), and processing speed, independent from the influence of demographic variables (e.g., age, race, education). This study assessed the association of objective measures of executive functioning and health literacy when controlling for premorbid estimated intellectual functioning and relevant demographic variables.

Participants and Methods: A sample of 44 adult patients (20 Male; 24 Female) referred for neuropsychological evaluation for memory complaints who were administered the Test of Premorbid Functioning (TOPF), and multiple measures of EF including the Trail Making Test – Part B (TMT-B), Stroop Color and Word Test