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Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in post-earthquake Haitian adults with traumatic amputations

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Haiti suffered a 7.0 - magnitude earthquake on January 12, 2010. More than 200,000 people were killed, with countless more injured and displaced. Due to injury, many Haitian had to undergo amputations of a limb or limbs. Exposure to the devastating effects of such massive earthquake and witnessing large numbers of dead and injured is traumatizing to humans and is known to be predictive of psychological disorders. This study was conducted to assess the prevalence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after having undergone amputation of a lower extremity, as a result of the earthquake. A convenience sample of Haitian participants (N=140) was interviewed. The PCL-C (PTSD Checklist Civilian version) in Creole was used to measure PTSD. Findings from the study indicated a substantial percentage of the participants suffer from PTSD (34.3%). Women experiencing PTSD were slightly higher than men (women 38.9%, men 29.4%). An effort in providing mental health and social services to adults with amputations is of utmost importance in addition to their physical needs related to amputated limb or limbs. A comprehensive program for integrating survivors of the Haitian earthquake in society is of vital importance including screening for vulnerable populations should be a national priority.

Biography

Anahid Kulwicki earned her BSN at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon and MSN and doctoral degrees from Indiana University School of Nursing, Indianapolis. Her program of research focuses on the health of immigrant, refugee and minority populations in the areas of domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, infant mortality, teen health, maternal child health, smoking and cancer prevention. She has published more than 40 papers, and she also collaborated with nursing and medical faculty in Jordan conducting research and publishing on honor crimes, HIV/AIDS and cardio-vascular risk factors. She is currently the Dean and Professor, College of Nursing and Health Sciences at University of Massachusetts Boston

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