

Do personality and life events underpin vulnerability for depression? An investigation in psychiatric patients at a hospital outdoor

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Introduction: It has been noted that more than 75% patients with major depression report negative life events prior to depression (Jenaway & Paykel, 1997). The relative risk of depression after exposure to negative life events varies from 3 to 10. It can be conceived that depression onset is more strongly related to dependent to independent life events. Life events can also be predecessor of anxiety disorder. Personality traits can be linked to life-event exposure and attribution. The underlying defense mechanism may play a role in appraisal of life events which in turn affect the cognitive and behavioural approaches of the individuals.

Aim: The present study investigate the link between personality traits, life events and onset of depression in psychiatric patients.

Methods:

Total 80 (n=80) patients (age group 20-50) were selected from the Salt Lake Government hospital out door with symptoms of major depression. The test batteries used were BDI, MADRS, Life events Schedule, and Personality Questionnaire. They were given the tests after one week of first visit at the hospital outdoor. A group of same number patients with other neurotic disorder was used as control.

Results:

Negative events were found significant ($p=0.05$) related with higher symptoms of depression. The cluster C personality

features were found significantly ($p=0.05$) related with neuroticism and negative events appraisal. The obsessive personality features were also significantly ($p=0.05$) related with higher depressive symptoms.

Conclusion:

It can be assumed that personality style and attribution has a major role in evaluation of traumatic life experiences. This in turn can make a subject vulnerable for the occurrence of depression. Personality trait and constitution can be a link between distressing life events and resultant depression. The feeling of having no control over situations or events cause worries which in turn incite helplessness leading to depression. Cluster C types of personality were found to have a strong association with negative life events appraisal and thus probably form a vulnerability construct for onset of depression.

References:

1. Jenaway, A & Paykel, E.S. (1997): Life events and depression. In Depression, Psychopathological & Therapeutic advances. Wiley & Sons.
2. Mazure, C.M, Bruce M.L. et. al. (2000): Adverse life events & cognitive personality characteristics in the prediction of major depression & antidepressant response. Am. J. Psychiatry, 157, 896-903.