Low Perceived Social Support does not Buffer Negative Health Outcomes

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Victims of domestic violence

• Have been reported to have poor adjustment: PTSD, depression, low self-esteem (Varkovitzky, 2004; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Berg, 2004; Mechanic, Weaver & Resick, 2008;).
The buffering hypothesis

• The buffering hypothesis states that social support plays a buffer role for those who experience stress, trauma or other related problems (Bolger & Amarel, 2007; Uchino, 2009)

• The buffering hypothesis was checked on victims of domestic violence with findings that social support provides an important resource to decrease, or minimize stress, improve general health to adjust to the violent situation (El-Bassel et al., 2001, Waldrop&Resick, 2004, Panaghi et al., 2012)
The buffering hypothesis

• Social support moderated effects of spouse abuse on health outcomes in a general health questionnaire

• Social support can decrease the negative physical and psychological influences of spouse abuse on health condition (Panaghi et al., 2012)
Organizational versus Family support

• The study that considers organizational social support was conducted in Bangladesh with the qualitative results that also support buffer hypothesis (Basu, 2008).

• Support was provided to victims by the victim support group – self-esteem and interpersonal trust that caused stress coping strategies, such as positive reassessment of stressful situation, planning how to overcome stress, even escape from the perpetrator.
The current study

- We checked the buffering hypothesis of social support provided to the victims of domestic violence
- The health outcome variables were: depression and anxiety
- Life satisfaction
- The added value of the study is the following:
  - Life satisfaction was not considered
The current study

• Social support was studied for both: organizational and family types of support via quantitative experimental design

• Social support was studied for different forms of domestic violence – physical, sexual, economical, emotional-verbal and isolation-domination
The current study – forms of violence

- Psychological violence:

- Dominance-isolation: controlling victim’s behaviors, isolating from friends and family members, demands for subservience, and rigid observances of traditional sex roles. (Tolman, 1989).

- Emotional-verbal violence: behaviors related to verbal attacks, attempts to demean the partner, and withholding emotional resources. (Tolman, 1989).
Method - sample

- 256 women victims of domestic violence were studied
- From the capital city of Tbilisi - 29.8%
- from regional towns and villages - 69.3%
- Age: 19-67, M 36, SD 9.664
- 69.7% Living with partner/spouse
- 89.0% have children
- 40.4% have higher education
- 65.1% employed
- Snowball principle was used
Method - tools

1. Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory, Tolman, 1995 – modified version
2. Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CESD) Laurie Radloff, 1977 – validated for this study
3. State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, Spielberger et al. 1983. We used only state anxiety subscale – validated for Georgian sample by Arutunov and Skhirtladze
4. The Satisfaction with Life scale, Pavot & Diener, 1993 – validated for Georgian sample by Skhirtladze
5. Social Support Questionnaire, Sarason et al. 1983 – modified version
Method - tools

- Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory, Tolman, 1995
- Added 12 questions on physical, economic and sexual violence from World Vision questionnaire on gender violence.

Social Support Questionnaire, Sarason et al. 1983

As the questionnaire studies general social support, we took out 5 questions not connected to DV cases, and left only 22 questions
Method – tools - CFA

- CFA of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CESD) resulted in a 9 item scale all loading on the depression factor
- Chi-Square 47.357 (P < 0.0091)
- CFI 0.911
- TLI 0.881
- RMSEA  0.055
- We had to take out 11 items that did not load on the factor
- EFA - 11 items loaded on three other factors that did not make any sense
Results - correlations

- Links among the variables were checked via correlations:
- Total social support correlates with both, family (0.953 p<0.01) and institutional (0.364 p<0.01) support.
- Total social support correlates only with depression (-0.146 p<0.05); no correlations were found with anxiety and life satisfaction.
- Family support correlates only with depression (-0.164 p<0.01); no correlations were found with anxiety and life satisfaction.
- Institutional support doesn't correlate with any of the three dependent variables.
Results – regression

• Regression analysis was used to test two models:
• 1st model: predictors were DV and social support forms. All of them were considered to be independent variables.
• 2nd model: predictors were the interactions between DV forms and social support forms.
• According to the model summary, the 1st model explains 18.2% (R² .182; Sig. .000) of dependent variables, while the 2nd model did not show any significant R Square change (R² .035; Sig. .372), which means that social support does not interact with DV
• ANOVA for both models was significant (.000)
Results – buffering hypothesis

• No connection was found between social support and anxiety and life satisfaction

• The connection was found (beta = -0.157 sig. 0.014) between social support and depression

• Social support as a moderator does not play a role, the buffering hypothesis is not supported
Results – forms of violence

• Physical violence (beta = 0.185, sig. 0.038) and isolation-domination (beta = 0.300, sig. 0.001) are significant predictors in case of depression

• Physical violence (beta = 0.508, sig. 0.000), economic violence (beta = 0.207, sig. 0.008) and isolation-domination (beta = 0.313, sig. 0.000) are significant predictors in case of anxiety

• Emotional-verbal violence (beta = 0.372, sig. 0.000) is the only predictor in case of life satisfaction
Discussion – the buffering hypothesis

• The buffering hypothesis is not supported

• The low quality social support, especially, the institutional one (Javkhishvili, et al., 2010, Javakhishvili, Lordkipanidze, Petriashvili, 2011)

• Correlation analysis shows that total social support and family support vary similarly, while institutional support - does not (institutional support does not correlate with outcome variables)
Discussion

• Different forms of violence:

• Physical and psychological violence are reported to predict depression (Varkovitzky, 2004).

• This is in line with our data. In addition, our data enables us to narrow down psychological violence to one of its forms - isolation

• We could not find data on relations between different types of violence and anxiety or life satisfaction
Discussion

• Physical and economical violence, as well as isolation-domination predicts anxiety – people with such problems have less self-confidence, feel insecure, feel tension.

• Emotional-verbal violence predicts life satisfaction, not anxiety and depression. This type of violence is regarded as more or less normal and does not affect victims’ health outcomes.
Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

Comments?