Abstract

This analysis examined the contribution of personal, family (maternal and paternal support; sibling support) and extra-familiar (peer support; other adults) resilience to the prediction of clinical levels of PTSD symptoms in adolescents reporting sexual abuse. Controls were established for abuse-related variables (type of abuse, severity and multiple abuse) in a representative sample of high school students in the province of Quebec. A total of 15.2% of adolescent females and 4.4% adolescent males in high school reported a history of sexual abuse in childhood. Sexually abused adolescent females (27.8%) were more likely than adolescent males (14.9%) to achieve scores with high clinical levels of PTSD. Hierarchical logistic regression revealed that over and above the characteristics of the sexual abuse experienced, resilience factors (maternal and peer support) contributed to the prediction of symptoms of PTSD attaining the clinical threshold. Alternative intervention and prevention practices geared to adolescent victims of sexual assault are discussed.

Keywords

Resilience, Sexual abuse in childhood, PTSD, Protection factors, Maternal and peer support