Abstract

Adversity during childhood has been the object of innumerous Psychology studies, justified by its prevalence and decisive impact in the development of human being. The most relevant results confirm that adverse childhood experiences increase the incidence of physical and psychological disturbances in adult age. We intends to characterizes adverse childhood experiences and relate them to health risk behaviour and with psychopathological symptoms, as found within a sample group of 42 female inmates of a correctional facility located in the north of Portugal. And it was applied as measure instruments the following questionnaires: the Socialdemographic and Life History Questionnaire, and Brief Symptom Inventory. Within the sample under analyses, the majority of the women describe a complex frame of several adverse experiences during their young age. From a total of ten possible types of adversity we have confirmed an average of total adversity of 5.05 (SD=2.63), as well as a high frequency of health risk behaviour and psychopathological symptoms. The results show a high correlation between adversity and psychopathological symptoms and various associations between adversity and health risk behaviours. Detainees faced a high frequency of adverse experiences during childhood and that in their adult age show several symptoms of psychopathology. Concurrently, they engage in a high number of cases of risk behaviour that might result not only in severe degradation of their health conditions, but also contribute to the perpetuation of the violence cycles they are involved in. Being so, we point out the importance of taking in consideration the adverse childhood experiences in the layout of the plans of intervention towards this population in order to minimize its consequences.

Keywords

Adversity, Childhood, Detainees, Health Risk Behaviours.