Abstract

Longitudinal studies of traumatized refugees are needed to study changes in mental health over time and to improve health-related and social interventions. The aim of this study was to examine changes in symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety, and in health-related quality of life during treatment in traumatized refugees. The study group comprises 55 persons admitted to the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims in 2001 and 2002. Data on background, trauma, present social situation, mental symptoms (Hopkins Symptom Checklist-25, Hamilton Depression Scale, Harvard Trauma Questionnaire), and health-related quality of life (WHO Quality of Life-Bref) were collected before treatment and after 9 months. No change in mental symptoms or health-related quality of life was observed. In spite of the treatment, emotional distress seems to be chronic for the majority of this population. Future studies are needed to explore which health-related and social interventions are most useful to traumatized refugees.

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