

Prevalence of ICD-11 PTSD: The first nationally representative study of Danish adolescents and young adults

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Introduction

PTSD has been recognized as a debilitating psychiatric disorder affecting populations worldwide¹. As illustrated in Figure 1, this has inspired many countries to estimate the national prevalence rates of PTSD in Europe and beyond using a variety of methodologies. Currently, no published studies exist that have estimated the prevalence of trauma exposure and PTSD among Danish adolescents and young adults.

Objectives

- ❖ To estimate rates of trauma exposure and ICD-11 PTSD among Danish youth.
- ❖ To test sex differences in trauma exposure and PTSD rates.

Method

A nationally representative sample was surveyed cross-sectionally from April to October 2022 among the general population of young Danish residents (48.1 % women, weighted), ranging in age between 15 to 29 years (n=2434). Multiple regression was used to study the relationship between trauma exposure, sex, age, and PTSD.

Table 1: Gender differences in trauma-exposure

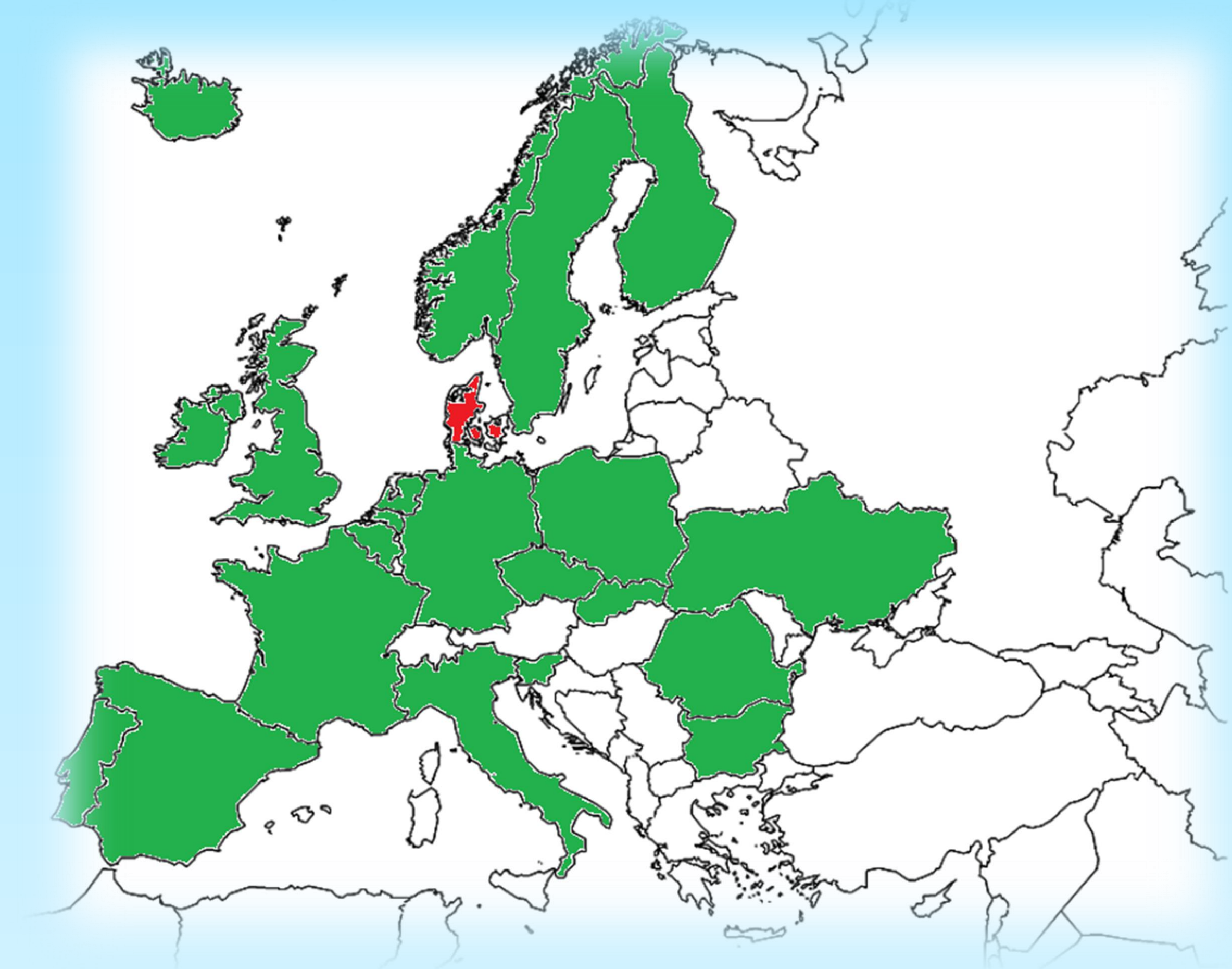
Trauma-type	Weighted			χ^2 (df), p,	ϕ
	Total %	Men: %	Women: %		
Accident	23.8	23.6	24.0	0.05(1), 0.83	0.01
Physical/psychol. violence	22.2	20.3	24.2	5.36(1), 0.02	0.04
Sexual violence	10.4	3.4	17.8	133.73(1), <.001	0.23
Life-threatening disease	17.3	14.3	20.0	13.80(1), <.001	0.08
Death of a loved one	16.1	13.0	19.4	18.24(1), <.001	0.09
Other	11.1	8.9	13.5	13.26(1), <.001	0.07
0	44.7	50.1	38.9	55.65(4), <.001	0.15
1	27.3	27.8	26.9		
2	16.0	13.9	18.3		
3	7.5	5.6	9.6		
4+	4.4	2.6	6.3		

Table 2: Multiple regression analysis of PTSD severity

	Std. beta	95% CI	
(intercept)	-.68	-.87	-.49
Accident	-.07	-.16	.03
Physical/psychol. violence	.36***	.26	.46
Sexual violence	.56***	.43	.69
Life threatening disease	-.06	-.16	.05
Death of a loved one	.17**	.07	.28
Other event	.61***	.49	.74
NEET	.22**	.06	.38
Sex, female	.35***	.25	.45
Sex, male	Ref.-group		
Age 15-19	.18*	.06	.30
Age 20-24	.15*	.04	.26
Age 25-29	Ref.-group		

***significant at $p \leq 0.001$; **significant at $p \leq 0.01$; *significant at $p \leq 0.05$.
NEET: Not in education, employment, or training, CI: confidence interval.

Figure 1: Existing national efforts to assess population PTSD rates



Results

Accidents and violence were the most common types of trauma exposure with females being more likely to experience sexual violence.

A total of 7.7 % endorsed probable PTSD with women reporting higher rates of clinical and subclinical PTSD (12.3 % and 12.7 %, respectively) than men (3.5 % and 7.3 %, respectively, $p < .001$). Our findings on PTSD prevalence in the general population of Denmark surpassed the rates of the official Danish Health Authority (Danish Health Authority, 2022) and the rates reported by the WHO (Kessler et al., 2017).

Findings from the multiple regression showed that female gender was associated with higher PTSD-severity, although the strongest predictor was trauma-type with other types of trauma and sexual violence displaying the strongest relationship to PTSD-severity overall ($F(14,1288)=27.78$, $p < .001$, Adjusted R-squared = 0.22).

Conclusion

This is the first study of PTSD in a nationally representative Danish sample. ICD-11 PTSD rates are higher than Danish official estimates in a random sample of the Danish adolescent and young adult population (7.7 % weighted prevalence compared to 1 %, Danish Health Authority, 2022). The study replicated international findings of sex differences in probable PTSD endorsement.