**The Prevalence of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Among Adolescents Exposed to Continuous Traumatic Stress in Sub-Saharan Africa**

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**Background:** Sub-Saharan Africa faces ongoing wars and armed conflicts that have persisted for decades, notably in countries like the Congo and Sudan. This exposure to violence has led to high levels of trauma at both individual and community levels, contributing to high rates of posttraumatic stress symptomatology. The concept of continuous traumatic stress (CTS) has emerged to describe the unique challenges posed by chronic trauma exposure, distinct from PTSD (Eagle & Kaminer, 2013; Goral et al., 2021; Leshem et al., 2023; Pat-Horenczyk & Schiff, 2019). CTS encompasses stress from cycles of violence, domestic abuse, gang violence, political instability, and ongoing threats, extending beyond the traditional PTSD framework to include symptoms such as somatisation, feelings of hopelessness, betrayal and exhaustion. Children and adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa are particularly vulnerable, with trauma exposure during critical developmental periods increasing their risk for long-term mental health challenges.

**Methods:** This systematic review and meta-analysis aimed to establish the pooled prevalence of PTSD among adolescents exposed to CTS in Sub-Saharan Africa adhering to PRISMA guidelines. We conducted our search in Medline (PubMed), PsycINFO (EBSCOhost), and PTSDpubs (ProQuest) databases using a detailed search strategy and two researchers to independently conduct the literature searches, screen titles and abstracts, and select the full texts of relevant articles.

**Results:** We included 12 eligible studies (n=7,826, 10-21 years). The pooled prevalence PTSD was 25.19% (95% CI: 20.33% to 30.75%) with significant variation across studies (I² = 94.9%, p < .000), indicating substantial heterogeneity. Comorbid mental disorders, such as depression and anxiety, were common in adolescents exposed to CTS. These findings underscore the need for mental health interventions, specifically for adolescents exposed to CTS.

**Conclusions**: Understanding the prevalence and characteristics of PTSD and CTS in Sub-Saharan Africa is crucial for developing effective prevention, treatment, and support programs for this highly affected adolescents.