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SECTION SYMPOSIA

SS084.1

SOMATIC COMPLAINTS AND SOMATIZATION IN REFUGEES WITH POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

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Somatic complaints in psychiatry are quite frequent. According to Kirmayer (1998), they could be seen as medically unexplained somatic symptoms, as hypochondrical worry, or as somatic clinical explanations of psychiatric disorders.

Refugees with experiences of war and persecution have somatic complaints in almost all cases, as earlier research in our centre proved (Kleijn e.a., 1998). Their complaints can be seen as pure somatization, but experiences of physical damage, like injuries or torture, could play also a great role.

In our research project, we investigated clusters of somatic complaints. We compared psychometric data of psychiatric scales with the PILL, a somatic complaints scale. Several findings of this research will be presented. Somatic complaints are more prominent in patients with severe psychological problems. There are many consequences for treatment: attention for somatic expression of traumatic memories is one of them. Therapies from the behavioural medicine, group therapy, family therapy and non verbal therapy are other strategies.