Overview

- Present original data relating social context, trauma, and depression
- Personality data (mentioned in original title and abstract) will not be discussed

Background

- Exposure to trauma predicts depression (e.g., Edwards et al., 2003)
  - Betrayal Trauma particularly predictive (Freyd, Klest & Allard, 2005)

Gender & Context of Trauma

- Previous research finds that men and women experience similar rates of trauma, but with different contextual factors
  - Women experience more betrayal trauma (Goldberg & Freyd, 2006)
  - This may help explain gender differences in depression

Social Context

- Gender, ethnicity, and social context impact both trauma exposure and symptoms following trauma (Gill & Page, 2006)
  - Female gender
  - Minority ethnicity
  - Other factors, e.g., urban living
Theoretical Framework

- Trauma causes symptoms when resources (internal and external) are depleted.
- People have fewer internal and external resources when:
  - They are members of lower-status groups (e.g., women, minorities).
  - Trauma occurs in a close relationship.

Questions & Hypotheses

- Do trauma, gender, and ethnicity predict depression symptoms?
  - People in lower-status groups (women, people of color) will have more depression symptoms.
  - People who experience trauma will have more depression symptoms.

Questions & Hypotheses

- Do social context factors including context of trauma, gender, & ethnicity interact to predict depression?
  - These relationships not simply additive—interactions among factors will lead to greater symptoms.

Current Study

- 503 Hawaii cohort participants
  - Part of a longitudinal cohort study assessing personality and health (Hampson et al.).
  - Caucasian, Japanese, & Hawaiian ancestry.
- Mailed surveys
  - Brief Betrayal Trauma Survey (BBTS).
  - Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CESD).

Current Study

- Diversity in Hawaii
  - No majority ethnic group.
  - We focus on the three largest ethnic groups.
- Social context in Hawaii
  - Racial integration as well as tensions.
  - Native Hawaiians have least status (e.g., positions of power, education, wealth).

Analyses

- Regression model assessing impact of gender, ethnicity, and trauma.
- Comparison of nested regression models to test for two-way and three-way interactions.
Trauma Predicts Depression

- Number of traumas predicts depression symptoms (semi-partial $r = .30$, $p < .01$)

Gender & Ethnicity Predict Depression

- Women report more depression symptoms (semi-partial $r = .10$, $p < .05$)
- Hawaiians report more depression symptoms (semi-partial $r = .12$, $p < .05$)
- People of Japanese ancestry report marginally more symptoms (semi-partial $r = .09$, $p = .05$)

Gender & Ethnicity Predict Trauma Exposure

- Traumas High in Betrayal
  - Female Gender
  - Hawaiian Ethnicity

- Traumas Low in Betrayal
  - Male Gender
  - Hawaiian Ethnicity
  - Interaction

Three-way Interactions

- Gender, ethnicity, and context of trauma interact to predict depression symptoms
- Model with interaction terms has significantly greater predictive power than model without, or with only two-way interaction terms ($F(4, 490) = 3.59$, $p < .01$)
- Interpretation of complex interactions requires caution

Interaction: Trauma context

Interaction: Depression

Note: Range of Depression scores was 0-41
Tying it all together

- Among Caucasian participants, gender, trauma, and depression results look similar to previous studies

- Japanese-American men are more likely to report depression symptoms than Caucasian men, less likely to report trauma than any other group

Conclusions

- Results provide preliminary support for social context as a moderator of the impact of trauma

- Lower status ethnic group membership may affect men more, as women already exhibit the impact of lower status related to gender

Tying it all together

- Native Hawaiians, particularly men, report greater trauma exposure, more symptoms of depression

- Native Hawaiian women show pattern of results similar to Caucasian women, Hawaiian men differ greatly from Caucasian men and have pattern more similar to women

Thank you!

- More information and reprints available at http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/