

Trauma, Social Context, and Demographic Predictors of Depression

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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 $r = .09, p = .05$)

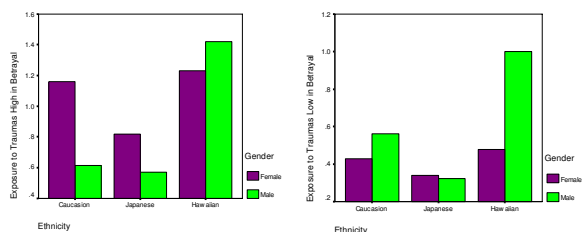
Gender & Ethnicity Predict Trauma Exposure

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

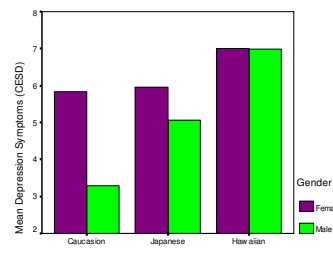
Three-way Interactions

- 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



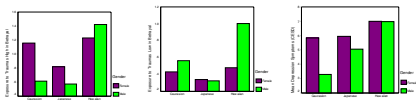
Interaction: Depression



Note: Range of Depression scores was 0-41

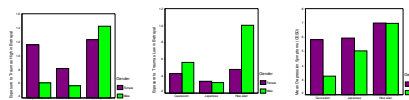
Tying it all together

- 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



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



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

Thank you!

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