Childhood Trauma: An Analysis of Associated Co-Morbidities and Various Psychotherapies

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**Research Questions**

What are the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and childhood trauma on mental health? What are the implications for treatment and intervention?

**Literature Review**

**Effects of trauma**

Research shows that the timing in which the trauma is experienced can affect mental health outcomes. Children exposed to trauma at a young age may have stronger negative thoughts associated with that memory through the development of the brain. The therapist will need to be trained to develop strategies to help the child cope with the trauma.

**Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)**

CPT is a form of cognitive-behavioral therapy designed to help individuals with PTSD. It is based on the premise that traumatic memories can be reprocessed to reduce symptoms of PTSD.

**Exposure Therapy**

Exposure therapy is a form of behavioral therapy that involves gradually exposing the patient to traumatic memories in a controlled setting. This can help to reprocess the traumatic memory and reduce symptoms of PTSD.

**Stressful life events**

Stressful life events can also affect mental health outcomes. Patients with more stressful life events may have stronger negative thoughts associated with that memory through the development of the brain. The therapist will need to be trained to develop strategies to help the child cope with the trauma.

**Comparing psychotherapies in children**

Comparing psychotherapies in children can be challenging, as different types of psychotherapy can be effective in reducing PTSD symptoms. CPT and prolonged exposure therapy produced improvement in PTSD, depression and dissociation in female victims of ACEs. CPT improved PTSD symptoms, depression and dissociation in women. In the therapy this was also the author. Again, only female adults participated in study.

**CPT and prolonged exposure therapy**

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**Discussion**

The research supports that children who experience trauma are likely to develop mental health issues such as PTSD as well as other various comorbidities if left untreated. In order to prevent the negative consequences of exposure to traumatic events, timely delivery of evidence-based psychological treatment is crucial (Dorsey, 2017). However, it is imperative that future studies involving psychological therapies consist of a larger sample sizes. Also, the professionals that administer the therapy should be sufficiently trained and unbiased. Also, it seems as though it would be advantageous to further identify which type of therapy is more suitable for which specific type of trauma endured. With the proper information and statistics to support the implementation of psychological therapy, clinicians would be more likely to properly treat and refer their patients to receive the appropriate therapy and in turn prevent further disease progression.

**Applicability to Clinical Practice**

Although the research seems to favor CBT as the first line treatment for children with PTSD, it is important to keep the option of EMDR as well as prolonged exposure therapy as second line of support therapy for treatment of PTSD in adults suffering from an ACE. It is also important that the therapist is certified to perform the psychological therapies. All patients should be screened for anxiety, trauma, and depression at every appointment.