From Pioneers to Scientists: Challenges in Establishing Evidence-Gathering Models in Torture and Trauma Mental Health Services for Refugees

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ABSTRACT

Outcome studies on treatment of trauma-affected refugees have been published but are limited in design and quality. In this article, we discuss possible impediments to pursuing research aimed at gathering evidence to support the efficacy of treatments in the field and the challenges in carrying out such inquiries. We then present a working model that demonstrates the feasibility of integrating outcome research into clinical settings. The aim of this model is to involve all personnel in generating research of high quality with minimal additional costs and time commitment. We conclude that although challenges remain in carrying out treatment outcome studies, they can be overcome by careful consultation and negotiation in a setting with an established ethos of commitment to the scientific endeavor. Ultimately, identifying the most effective interventions will provide better treatment and quality of life for the large number of traumatized refugees seeking assistance for mental health problems.

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