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TRAUMATIC EVENTS IN CHILHOOD AND PSYCHOSIS IN ADULT LIFE: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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Introduction: There is a growing interest in establishing a relationship between several mental disorders and traumatic life events in childhood and adolescence.

It has been seen a high prevalence of these traumatic events when reviewing the clinical history of patients with mental illness.

Aims: Measuring the prevalence of traumatic events in a sample of patients with a diagnosis of psychotic disorder.

Methodology: A retrospective descriptive study was made. The sample comprised 50 patients admitted to our psychiatric inpatient unit. These patients were separated into different categories according to clinical diagnosis and demographic variables. Data was obtained through clinical interview before their hospital discharge. We tried to detect the presence or absence of real or imaginary memories of traumatic events during their childhood or adolescence.

Results: 52% of patients had a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia. 64% reported a history of substance abuse in their family. 20% referred the experience of having suffered sexual abuse by a member of their family, and up to 44% of them by someone other than family. 22% reported having suffered some kind of physical abuse by their parents, and more than 70% reported having suffered some type of traumatic event in the school environment.

Conclusions: There is an important amount of traumatic events in childhood and adolescence in this sample of patients. However, concluding that such traumatic events could eventually produce severe psychiatric disorders is still quite controversial. In order to understand better the association between childhood trauma and severe mental illnesses more research is needed.