Letter to the Editor

Post-traumatic stress disorder in patients with burn injuries due to sulfur mustard exposure

Dear Editor,

We read the Hobbs’ article which has been recently published in May 2015 in Burns and enjoyed a lot [1]. However, we would like to add a few points about our experience to his invaluable paper.

Burning by chemical weapons as one of the most severe traumatic agents can produce post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In Iraq–Iran war (1980–1988), civilian and non-civilian people were exposed to these agents repeatedly and sulfur mustard was the main chemical agent which Iraqi army used through the war [2]. Subsequently, about 34,000 Iranian victims needed follow up care due to respiratory, ocular, dermatologic and so on complications at the end of the war [3–5].

The frequency of PTSD among Iranian veterans was reported from 8% through 58% [6]. As the Iranian victims get disability compensation, it can be supposed as a secondary gain in precipitating and perpetuating risk factor in malingered and sick-rolled subjects particularly because of lacking a precise tool to approve the diagnosis [7]. Iranian researchers showed that the experience of PTSD could affect other victim’s family members. This type of PTSD was called secondary PTSD [8]. Dworkin and colleagues in their study in Halabja (a city in Iraq which was chemically attacked by Iraqi army) showed that the female gender and the elderly people were more likely affected by PTSD than the others [9]. Considering Hashemian and colleagues’ study, there were a high level of comorbidities between PTSD, anxiety and depression. They also stated that the intensity of exposure to SM was associated with sustainability of PTSD [10].

Conflict of interest

None.

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Ethics committee approval

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References


Authors’ contributions

1. Dr. Seyed Mansour Razavi designed the idea, drafted the paper and approved the version to be published.
2. Dr. Payman Salamati designed the idea, revised the paper critically and approved the version to be published.
3. Dr. Reza Rostami designed the idea, revised the paper and approved the version to be published.


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