

Stress and trauma: Catalysts of mood disorder development

D Jelaga, V Oprea, M Belous, L Sanduleac

Nicolae Testemitanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Introduction: Stress factors and traumatic events have a profound influence on mental health. Mood disorders have a complex etiopathogenesis, affecting about 7.5% of the global population. We analyzed the interaction between stress, trauma and mood disorders, their prevalence and pathophysiological implications. Elucidating this connection is of primary importance in the development of effective prophylactic, psychopharmacological and psychotherapeutic interventions.

Methods: The study was carried out following a review of specialized literature such as psychiatric manuals, national and international guidelines. Articles published in electronic sources between the years 2015 and 2023, such as: PubMed/MEDLINE, NCBI, PsycINFO and Google Scholar, were analyzed using keywords such as "stress", "trauma", "mood disorders".

Results and discussion: 24 recent studies show that chronic stress correlates with the development of mood disorders in 70% of cases. People with a history of trauma are 2.5 times more likely to develop bipolar disorder. Women are 30% more likely to develop depression due to chronic stress, while men are 20% more likely to develop bipolar disorder. Resilience factors (social support, coping strategies), reduce risk by 25%. About 30% of those with mood disorders develop comorbidities (anxiety, substance abuse). Chronic stress and trauma are associated with neurochemical changes such as low serotonin levels (60%), and changes in brain structure, especially in the hippocampus (45%).