

Narrative representations of complex post-traumatic stress disorder in the life stories of addicts using novel psychoactive substances.

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Complex post-traumatic stress disorder, a condition recently included in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) but not in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM-5) has been associated with substance use disorder (SUD) and behavioural addictions. The main difference between cPTSD and PTSD is that with cPTSD, the person is exposed to prolonged traumatization, starting usually early in their life, and/or occurring in an interpersonal context from where escape is not possible (e.g., slavery, sex work, and substance use). The use of novel psychoactive substances, as indicated by Kassai et al. (2017) represents a particular type of trauma, due the distortions of the self, to the unpredictability of NPSs and the overall rapid progression of SUD. Authors analyse the negative childhood episodes and nadir point episodes in the life interviews of 77 persons with SUD to identify the circumstances characteristic of cPTSD in this specific sample. In this context, NPS use is interpreted as a repetition compulsion – a universal phenomenon among traumatized individuals.

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