

Family Conflicts as Sources of Mental Health Disturbances in Infant and Adolescent Victims of War

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Aim. Analysis of the role of family in the genesis of mental problems in children during war.

Method. Family dynamics was analyzed through psychiatric examinations, observation, and personality tests.

Results. Families whose internal conflicts were caused by war traumas were classified into seven characteristic groups: displaced families, incomplete families, refugee families, families with a member missing in action, families with a member returned from a detention camp, families with parents of different ethnicities, and families with a member siding with the enemy. Numerous mental problems occurring in children were the result of family interpersonal relations.

Conclusion. Predominant mental problems in the children who have not overcome their traumatic experience are depressive reactions, suicide attempts, anxiety, and behavioral disorders. Early detection and understanding of intrafamily conflicts and the consequential mental problems are a prerequisite for the provision of a proper assistance and efficient preventive measures.

Key words: adolescent behavior; child behavior; family; mental health; PTSD; war