

## **P-1443 - GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PTSD DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA AND SUICIDAL IDEATION IN A SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SAMPLE**

R.Steyn

Graduate School of Business Leadership, University of South Africa, Midrand, South Africa

**Introduction:** Exposure to traumatic events may precipitate suicidal ideation and previous research has shown that specific PTSD symptoms, particularly hyperarousal and intrusive thoughts, correlate with suicidal ideation.

**Objective:** To test if gender-specific configurations of PTSD symptoms are predictive of suicidal ideation.

**Aim:** To provide practitioners with gender-specific and refined PTSD symptom indicators that may precipitate suicidal behaviour.

**Method:** A male group (N = 161) and a female group (N = 56) of South African police officers were assessed by means of the Posttraumatic Diagnostic Scale and a short version of the Adult Suicide Ideation Questionnaire. Linear and hierarchical regressions were used to determine which PTSD symptom criteria best predicted suicide ideation.

**Results:** Hyperarousal was the primary predictor of suicide ideation with males ( $R^2$  [adjusted] = 0.249), with avoidance added only marginally (2.5%) to the model. For females intrusive thoughts was the primary predictor of suicide ideation ( $R^2$  [adjusted] = 0.381), with general problems adding 7.4% to the variance declared in the model. In both cases the contributions of the remaining two symptom types were negligible.

**Conclusion:** In this study hyperarousal (for males) and intrusive thoughts (for females) significantly correlated with suicide ideation and it is suggested that practitioners be alert to gender-specific symptom groupings as possible indicators of suicidal ideation. This has implications for suicide risk assessment and prevention measures.