

Religiosity, trauma, and posttraumatic stress disorder in a sample of East African refugees

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BACKGROUND

Somali refugees have been found to experience more exposure to traumatic events than other refugees and asylum seekers (Gerritsen et al, 2006). Culturally, religious beliefs are key to Somali perceptions mental health and wellbeing (Abu-Raiya & Pargament, 2011; Mulatu, 1999).

METHOD

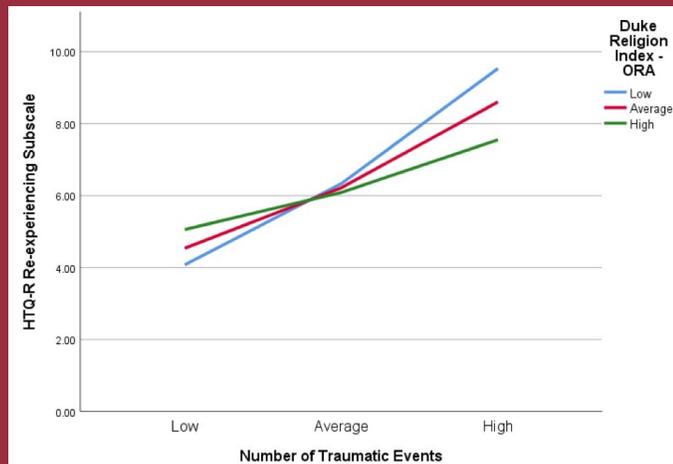
This study examined organizational religious activity (ORA), non-organizational religious activity (NORA), and intrinsic religiosity as potential moderators of PTSD symptom clusters among a sample of Somali refugees in the United States. Participants were 59 Somali refugees in the Pacific Northwest ($M_{age} = 39$ years, 66% male). All measures were translated into Common Somali language and assessed for cultural appropriateness. Moderation analyses were conducted using the R package, "stats" (v.3.6.2).

RESULTS

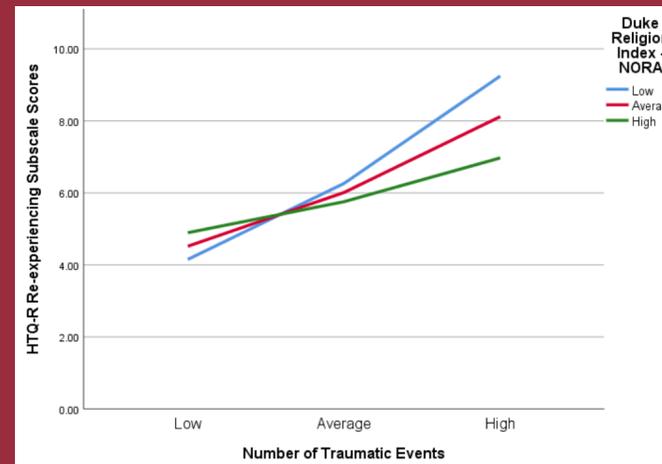
Results indicated high rates of exposure to traumatic life events ($M = 4.93$; $SD = 7.40$) and overall PTSD symptom severity ($M = 22.95$; $SD = 11.39$). ORA and NORA moderated the relationship between trauma exposure and re-experiencing, with the interaction terms explaining for 11% ($f[59] = -3.90, p < .001$) and 8% ($f[60] = -3.36, p = .001$) of the variance in the respective models. Intrinsic religiosity was not a statistically significant moderator ($t[55] = -1.55, p = .13$)

Religiosity may buffer re-experiencing symptoms of PTSD within a sample of Muslim refugees.

Organizational religious activity (ORA) as moderator.



Non-organizational religious activity (NORA) as moderator.

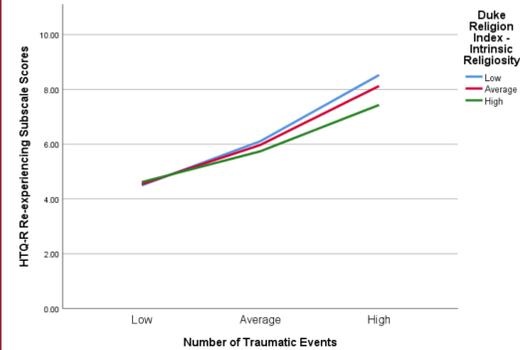


RESULTS CONT.

HTQ-R	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Main test	4.93	7.40
Subscale	22.95	11.39

Note. The "main test" refers to the 41 yes/no items while the "subscale" refers to the 16 posttraumatic symptoms questions on a 4-point Likert scale

Intrinsic religiosity as moderator.



MEASURES

Trauma exposure and posttraumatic stress

The Harvard Trauma Questionnaire-Revised assesses for 41 categories of potential trauma exposures. These Yes/No items are then totaled, creating a Trauma Events Score. The HTQ-R has a Posttraumatic Symptoms subscale in which 16 symptoms and their severity over the last seven days are assessed (Mollica, McDonald, Massagli, & Silove, 2004.) Each of the symptoms are measured on a 4-point Likert scale (*Not at all—Extremely*). Alpha = .96.

Religiosity

Intrinsic religiosity, ORA, and NORA were all assessed using the DUREL (Koenig, Meador, & Parkerson, 1997).
ORA: 5 point frequency scale (*Never—More than once per week*)
NORA: analogous scale (*Rarely or never—More than once a day*)
Intrinsic: Sum of the last three items of the scale

