

An Analysis of the Psychological Stressors among Hearing Impaired Children with Conversion Disorder

Hifsa Batool¹

Adila Khanam²

Abstract

The signs and symptoms of conversion disorders emerge due to the reaction of any psychological stressful event in one's life. The purpose of this study was to analyze the psychological stressors in hearing impaired children with conversion disorder and to evaluate the occurrence of various stressors based on their demographic characteristics. This was a descriptive study, and a questionnaire was used through survey method to collect the data. Population of the study was all the children receiving their treatment of conversion disorder from different hospitals of Punjab province, Pakistan. Sample of the study was 40 hearing impaired children with conversion disorder selected through purposive sampling technique. All the participants of the study were firstly assessed according to the criteria of conversion disorder described in (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-V) DSM-V. Life events scale was administered to collect data for psychological stressors that the hearing-impaired students were facing currently and that trigger them towards this ailment. Statistical analysis demonstrated that gender, residential area, number of siblings and birth order effect the lives of the hearing-impaired children with conversion disorder as girls with conversion disorder experience high level of psychological stress as compared to the boys with conversion disorder. Meanwhile rural children, only child and the children who were from younger age group experience high level of psychological stress. It can be concluded from the findings of this study that government and non-government organization should arrange workshops and seminar for the counseling of parents and to teach them how to deal with their hearing-impaired children when they demand excessively and to teach the parents about their responsibilities in the development of their hearing-impaired children.

Keywords: *Psychological stressors, analysis, hearing impaired children, conversion disorder.*

1. Ph.D Scholar, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad.

2. Quaid e Azam Academy for Educational Development Punjab, Lahore.

Introduction

In this modern age of technology there is a high prevalence of mental illness. It is estimated that it has prevalence of 10 to 20% among children and adolescents worldwide, thus making it leading cause of impairment in the young people. Furthermore, the treatment of mental illness has been increased significantly in the past decade around the globe. So, there's a dire need to pay special consideration to this phenomenon to bring a healthy lifestyle in our society as untreated mental or psychological disorder can impair the life of any individual among all sphere of life.

Conversion disorder is one of the psychological elements that foster neurological symptoms in the individual such as tremors, speech impairment and paralysis. Highly stressful events, usually causes psychological reaction in any individual. This ailment does not appear suddenly and do not develop right away so the therapist has to get a complete history of the individual about all stressful happenings and sorrowful occurring of the patient's life. Conversion disorder is mental state in which physical symptoms are mostly the cause of any stressful event or any tragedy. The person who is not able to speak in front of public due to fear of speaking, is an example of Conversion disorder (Ludwig et al, 2018).

Freud (1984) an Austrian psychoanalyst introduced the term "Conversion" as a hypothetical mechanism through which psychological stressors lead any person towards physical symptoms. In this way conversion disorder can be defined as an ailment in response to the difficulties in patients' life may be the cause of conversion. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition (DSM-V), define Conversion disorder as a condition that maybe diagnosed with signs and symptoms specifically including the following, abnormal movement, attacks of faintness, weakness of paralysis, numbness, speech symptoms, swelling symptoms or special sensory symptom (Vroege et al., 2021)

Conversion disorder is a condition that was called "hysteria" in the past. In the medical vocabulary "hysteria" is one of the oldest words. It is derivative of a Greek word "hysterus" that means wandering of uterus in the body. In this way it was considered that hysteria has just prevalence among women, and it is a disease of women. But Briquette and Charcot contributed a lot in the formation the concept of conversion disorder. They observed that there is a link between the signs and symptoms of Conversion disorder and tragic and stressful events (Akhtar, Shah & Zaman, 2015; Elzinga, 2013). It is suggested by many researchers that Conversion disorder is the reaction of any emotional stress or any conflicting situation into the presence of a continuing biological,

personal vulnerability or environmental factors. It is common in our society that people appreciate physical and apparent symptoms more; conversion disorder may be the way of expressing their feelings that they face in their life in times of difficult and frustrating situations. Stressful situations and events in one's life attract attention as much as possible triggers of any individual and in the same way life events co-morbid with stressors and frustration meet up at the premorbid personality also. Any experience of sorrow and pain suggest medical illness death of loved ones, losing everything in a natural disaster, divorce or any sudden up break can be as much as impact as to trigger any clinical or mental illness as well as various somatic disturbances including conversion disorder (Al-balas et al., 2021).

Stress is one of the greatest contributions to illness in this industrialized society around the globe. There is much research related to this topic, and it is believed that consistent and prolonged stressful experiences in one's life main trigger clinical depression and various somatic disturbances. In Pakistan there are your studies have been conducted to assess the psycho-social surfaces affecting the life of individuals in our population. Research conducted by (Khan et al., 2006). Those psycho-social stressors are important triggering factor for somatoform disorders. People who face problems in their sport with primary group and in their society or twice likely inclined towards somatoform disorders.

Objective of Study

The objectives of present study were:

- To identify various psychological stressors among hearing impaired children with conversion disorder.
- To compare various psychosocial stressors on the basis of different demographic variables of the hearing-impaired children.

Methodology

Research design

It was a descriptive research design, and a questionnaire was used through survey method to collect the data from the selected sample of study.

Population and Sample

Population of the study was all the diagnosed children with conversion disorder taking their treatment from different hospitals of Punjab province. Sample of the study N=40 diagnosed children of conversion disorder

including N=20 boys and N=20 girls were selected through purposive sampling technique, Convenient and purposive sampling technique from indoor and outdoor departments of psychiatry wards of different hospitals of Punjab. Age range of children was 06 to 18 years. Children who have received diagnosis of conversion disorder since last 3 months were selected in sample.

Instruments of the study:

Following instruments were used as instrument of the present study.

1. The Life Event Scale (LES)
2. Diagnostic criteria of DSM-V

The Life Event Scale (LES)

The life event scale (LES) was constructed by Holmes and Rahe in 1967. It is a 43-item scale, and patients were asked to tally the list of life events based on relative score. The present study reliability of the scale was assessed in Pakistani culture, and it was 0.78.

Procedure

Life event scale (LES) was administered individually on a sample of 40 hearing impaired boys and girls diagnosed with conversion disorder. Demographic variables were asked before asking that questions. Consent of all the hearing-impaired children and their guardians for granted before taking the child as a sample study. Consent and trust of psychiatry ward and doctor linked with the conversion patient was also taken prior to finalizing the sample.

Hearing impaired Children were assured that their identity and the information they shared while filling this form will not be disclosed and will be kept confidential. They were requested to follow the instructions and respond to all the instructions as they feel. They were also requested to provide correct information related to their demographic variables including age, number of siblings, birth order and residential area.

RESULTS

Table 1

Hearing impaired Girls with conversion disorder experience high level of psychological stress as compared to the boys.

	N	Mean	St. Dev	SE Mean
Stress M	20	101.6	37.7	6.4
Stress F	20	148.9	51.5	8.7
T-Value = -4.38, P-Value = 0.000, DF = 68, Pooled St. Dev = 45.2				

Since the p-value is less than level of significance, so we accept our hypothesis and conclude that hearing impaired girls with conversion disorder experience high level of psychological stress as compared to the hearing-impaired boys.

Table 2

Rural hearing-impaired children with conversion disorder experience high level of psychosocial stressors as compared to the urban hearing-impaired children.

	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
Stress R	16	174.1	53.9	13
Stress U	19	127.7	39.5	9.1
T-Value = 2.93, P-Value = 0.003, DF = 33, Pooled St. Dev = 46.6				

Since the p-value is less than level of significance, so we accept our hypothesis and conclude that rural hearing-impaired children with conversion disorder experience high level of psychosocial stressors as compared to the urban hearing-impaired children.

Table 3

Youngest hearing-impaired child with conversion disorder experience high level of psychological stressors as compared to the elder hearing-impaired children

	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
Stress Y	5	180.2	75.6	34
Stress E	35	121.0	46.6	5.8
T-Value = 2.62, P-Value = 0.005, DF = 68, Pooled St. Dev = 48.8				

Since the p-value is less than level of significance, we accept our hypothesis and conclude that youngest hearing-impaired children with conversion disorder experience high level of psychosocial stressors as compared to the elder hearing-impaired children.

Table 4

Single hearing-impaired child with conversion disorder experience high level of psychological stressors as compared to the hearing-impaired child with siblings

	N	Mean	St. Dev	SE Mean
Stress U	17	150.6	51.2	9.8
Stress E	23	109.4	44.1	6.7

T-Value = 3.57, P-Value = 0.000, DF = 68, Pooled St Dev = 46.9

Since the p-value is less than level of significance, so we accept our hypothesis and conclude that single hearing-impaired child with conversion disorder experience high level of psychological stressors as compared to the hearing-impaired child with siblings.

Discussion

Stressful life events impact drastically on the quality of life and personal well-being of the people at risk for mental disorders. Psychosocial suppresses have a strong relationship with somatization. People who are sensitive and sentimental are very appealing towards adoption of somatoform disorders. The common psychosocial stressors in life including death of any closed one, natural disaster, breakup of relationship or any sudden loss are the major triggers of Conversion disorder (Khan et al., 2004)

The study demonstrated that there is a significant difference in the stress of girls and boys. Girls with conversion disorder experience high level of stress as compared to boys. Literature review suggests that the female patients diagnosed with Conversion disorder have a rapid manifestation towards conversion disorders as compared to the male patient who adopt Conversion disorder on a quitter pace and have passionate somatic symptoms that lead them towards somatization disorder (Khan et al., 2004). Results also suggested that married female conversion patients have high level of stress (M= 174.1, SD=53.9) as compared to single female patients of conversion disorder (M=127.7, SD=39.5). Obviously married female has to face many responsibilities as

compared to single females. Married females have to face many psychosocial stressors as trouble with in-laws' argument with spouse and many more. There psychosocial stressors increase risk of conversion disorder (Jasmine and Deeba, 2017).

Another hypothesis was to analyze the psychosocial stressors among urban children and rural children. The finding of the study is correlates with previous literature. The literature review suggests that Conversion disorders occur more commonly in rural areas, among individuals with fewer years of education and of lower socioeconomic status (Voon et al., 2010). Research findings show that 42% female and 27% male patients scored below 150 on life event scale (LES) whereas 7% male and 21% female patients scored 150 to 299 range, and only 1% female patient scored 300 and above range on LES. Their findings show that female patients experience more life events or psychosocial stressors as compared to male patients of conversion disorder (Fox et al., 2021).

Social psychologists view that women are also prompted to keep negative views as compared to men and experience more pessimistic feelings in the face of threatening and stressful situations. (Khan et al., 2006). Conversion disorder may affect people at any age. While some studies have suggested that conversion disorder occurs more frequently in women, it can affect both men and women. Everyone who develops conversion disorder was exposed to a traumatic event.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that psychosocial stressors are important causal factors for conversion disorder among hearing-impaired children. Individuals experiencing issues with their primary support group and social environment are twice as likely to present with conversion disorder. The aims of the present study were to identify and compare various psychosocial stressors among hearing-impaired children with conversion disorder. The research findings indicate that psychological stressors play a significant role in conversion disorder among hearing-impaired children. The results also suggest that hearing-impaired girls with conversion disorder experience higher levels of psychological stressors compared to hearing-impaired boys. Additionally, it is concluded that rural children, younger children, and single hearing-impaired children experience high levels of stress.

Educational Implications

Educational Implications: Students with hearing impairments

experience ongoing stress both at home and in school, impacting their social, emotional, and cognitive adjustment. Parents of children with hearing impairments exhibit varying behaviors; some struggle to cope with the challenges, some attribute their children's behavior to their impairment, and others place blame on schools for inadequate support. Based on current research, it is recommended that educators of hearing-impaired children organize workshops and seminars to address the mental health needs of these special needs students, especially those at risk of behavioral and emotional issues that could lead to conversion disorder. Enhancing the mental well-being of hearing-impaired children represents a significant milestone in their lives, equipping them with coping mechanisms to reduce stress and focus on their overall well-being.

Recommendations

- The 21st century is characterized by rapid advancement, leading to increased stressors for individuals worldwide.
- Psychologists and health professionals should educate parents on how to respond to teachers when their children exhibit excessive behavior.
- The education department should organize workshops focusing on counseling for multidisciplinary teams working with hearing-impaired children.
- The workshops should emphasize the importance of not overprotecting disabled children.
- Professionals should be encouraged to be proactive rather than reactive members of the team supporting hearing-impaired children.

References

- Akhtar, J., Shah, U., & Zaman, S. (2015). Anxiety symptoms in patients with conversion disorder. *Jpmi: Journal of postgraduate medical institute*, 29(4).
- Al-balas, H. I., Abuhlaweh, M., Melhem, H. B., & Al-balas, H. (2021). Conversion disorder with aphonia in 12 years old male patient: A case report. *International journal of surgery case reports*, 84, 106135.
- Elzinga, A. (2013). Punta Arenas and Ushuaia: Early explorers and the politics of memory in constructing Antarctic gateway cities. *The Polar Journal*, 3(1), 227-256.
- Fox, V., Dalman, C., Dal, H., Hollander, A. C., Kirkbride, J. B., & Pitman, A. (2021). Suicide risk in people with post-traumatic stress disorder: A cohort study of 3.1 million people in Sweden. *Journal of affective disorders*, 279, 609-616.
- Guz, H., Doganay, Z., Ozkan, A., Colak, E., Tomac, A., & Sarisoy, G. (2004). Conversion and somatization disorders: Dissociative symptoms and other characteristics. *Journal of psychosomatic research*, 56(3), 287-291.
- Jasmine, U. H., & Deebea, F. (2017). Cognitive behaviour therapy to treat a case of conversion disorder with mutism in Bangladesh.
- Khan, S., Ladha, A., Khan, S. K., Khan, S. F., Malik, A. A., Memon, Z., ... & Naqvi, H. A. (2006). Presentation and features of conversion disorder at a tertiary care hospital in Karachi. *Pakistan Journal of Neurological Sciences (PJNS)*, 1(3), 128-131.
- Levenson, J. (2018). Psychological factors affecting other medical conditions: Clinical features, assessments, and diagnosis. *Uptodate: In*.
- Ludwig, I., Pasman, J. A., Nicholson, T., Aybek, S., David, A. S., Tuck, S., ... & Stone, J. (2018). Stressful life events and maltreatment in conversion (functional neurological) disorder: Systematic review and meta-analysis of case-control studies. *The lancet psychiatry*, 5(4), 307-320.
- Nazar, Z., Awan, N. R., & Akhtar, J. (2010). Psychosocial stressors in patients with conversion disorder presenting with non epileptic fit. *Jpmi: Journal of postgraduate medical institute*, 24(2).

- Vroege, L., Koppenol, I., Kop, W. J., Riem, M. M., & Van Der Feltz-Cornelis, C. M. (2021). Neurocognitive functioning in patients with conversion disorder/functional neurological disorder. *Journal of Neuropsychology*, 15(1), 69-87.
- Voon, V., Gallea, C., Hattori, n., Bruno, m., Ekanayake, V., & Hallett, M. (2010). The involuntary nature of conversion disorder. *Neurology*, 74(3), 223-228.

Citation of the Article:

Batool, H., & Khanam, A. (2024). An analysis of the psychological stressors among hearing impaired children with conversion disorder. *Journal of Inclusive Education*, 8(1), 1-10

Received on: August 12, 2024
Revised on: December 17, 2024
Accepted on: January 27, 2025