ABSTRACT

EMOTION DYSREGULATION: A PREDICTOR FOR CBT TREATMENT OUTCOMES IN A COMORBID PTSD AND SUD POPULATION

By

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Trauma has been shown to disrupt self-regulatory processes; emotion regulation deficits have also been implicated in the initiation and maintenance of substance use disorders. Treatments for these complex comorbid problems utilize a variety of approaches. However, to date, few studies have examined the effect of various available treatments on emotion dysregulation in this population. This study extends the research on emotion regulation among the comorbid PTSD and SUD population. This study is a secondary analysis of part of the data from a randomized clinical trial assessing the relative efficacy of two active treatment conditions for substance dependent individuals who also meet criteria for current DSM-IV PTSD. The current study examines features associated with emotion dysregulation, correlating dysregulation with PTSD and SUD symptoms, the study focuses on baseline emotion dysregulation as a predictor of treatment outcomes. Additionally, the study examines emotion dysregulation over time to determine the mutability of this complex factor in response to treatment. Lastly, this study utilizes a case illustration to examine, in more depth, change in emotion dysregulation over time as measured by physiological arousal; this methodology provides for more a thorough depiction of the phenomenon. Results: Correlation analyses identified that baseline emotion dysregulation is associated with baseline PTSD symptom severity but not with baseline substance use frequency among those with comorbid...
PTSD and SUD. Repeated measures ANOVA determined that the high baseline dysregulation group that received RPT treatment showed no change in days used from baseline to follow-up. Additionally the high baseline dysregulation group that received COPE treatment showed a trending decrease in dysregulation at follow-up. Altogether, this exploratory study provided evidence that exposure therapy can be tolerated by and beneficial to highly dysregulated persons with both PTSD and SUD and that psychotherapy focusing only on substance used may be contraindicated for highly dysregulated individuals with comorbid PTSD and SUD.

**Keywords:** substance dependence, posttraumatic stress disorder, emotion dysregulation, prolonged exposure