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Introduction: A growing interest is raising on the issue of prisoners' mental health (Birmingham, 2003). Scholars have mainly addressed the psychiatric and personality disorders among prisoners (Fazel & Seewald, 2012) and other authors have stressed the importance to highlight the role of psychopathological and specifically dissociative symptoms (Ruiz, Poythress, Lilienfeld, & Douglas, 2008).

Objectives: This study sought to examine the presence and the severity of dissociative symptoms, as well as their relationships with psychopathology.

Aims: We analyze three different kinds of dissociative experiences (dissociative amnesia, depersonalization/derealization, and absorption in imaginative processes) in order to investigate potential links between them and a broad range of psychopathological symptoms.

Methods: A sample of 28 male inmates (mean age=41.04) was assessed by administering the Dissociative Experiences Scale-II (DES-II; Carlson & Putnam, 1993), and the 53-items Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI; Derogatis, 1975, 1983) in order to assess the current psychopathological distress with a total score and 9 subscales.

Results: The mean level of dissociation (DES-II, total score= 17.94) was in line with the normative data for clinical samples, as previous studies have already shown (Snow, Beckman, & Brack, 1996). Several positive correlations among the three types of dissociative experiences and all the different domains of psychopathological symptoms are explored in depth.

Conclusions: Dissociation and psychopathology seems to be much prevalent among prisoners, as well as strongly related. Further studies should aim to clarify the direction of this link, and try to address the question as to whether they are more personally-rooted or situationally-determined.