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## LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN RELATION TO COMPLEX PTSD

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**Introduction:** European countries face immigration problems with refugees. Many refugees suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Numerous studies have shown that PTSD is associated with cognitive problems that interfere with language acquisition.

**Objectives:** In this study we have explored demographic and psychological variables that influence language acquisition. Expected is that low levels of language acquisition are associated with severeness of PTSD.

**Aims:** From clinical experience, we have noticed that Dutch fluency is an important factor in social adjustment and mental health. Furthermore it is expected that PTSD symptoms delay language acquisition.

**Methods:** Participants are 150 refugees with PTSD. The severeness of PTSD was assessed with a structured interview and self-rating questionnaires; HTQ, HSCL-25 and PILL scale. The ability to speak Dutch language was measured by the choice of refugees to have an interpreter or not. Demographic data for age, sex, education and years since resettlement are included. We searched for linear relations between PTSD and other variables.

**Results:** Results confirm our clinical observation of a relation between higher numbers of traumatic experiences related to complex PTSD and the choice to have a interpreter.

There are correlations between complex PTSD, number of traumatic events, years since resettlement, age and language acquisition although multiple regressive analysis indicates this result is not significant because of the small variation in this group of refugees with severe PTSD.

**Conclusion:** This study stresses the necessity to include additional objective instruments to measure language acquisition of refugees.