

## **Children exposed to chronic traumatic events in the Gaza Strip**

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### **Abstract**

This presentation will focus on an exploration of the relationship between chronic traumatic events and symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) among children in the Gaza Strip. A sample of 1,137 children aged between 10 and 18 years were randomly selected from all parts of the Gaza Strip to participate in this study. The participants completed a Checklist of Traumatic Experiences (CTE) and a Symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Scale (SPTSDS). Psychological responses associated with chronic exposure to traumatic events are presented. Overall, the exposure to chronic traumatic experiences led to an increase of the symptoms of PTSD among Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip. The most traumatic experiences that influenced the development of PTSD symptoms most is destroying completely or partially the house. The most prevalent types of PTSD were: 25% of children suffered from cognitive symptoms; 22% suffered from emotional symptoms; 22% suffered from social behavioural disorders; 17% suffered from academic behavioural disorders, and 14% suffered from somatic symptoms.

Children in Gaza are unlikely to have a normal childhood in the current circumstances and the psychological well-being future of Palestinian children is at risk of being compromised by on-going traumatic experiences.

**Key words:** Children; chronic traumatic events; PTSD; Gaza

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