



Beyond Uniform Narratives: Rethinking the Mental Health Impact of War through Diversity, Gaps, and Future Directions

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DEAR EDITORS,

The article titled Beyond the battlefield: understanding the mental health impact of war, is very appropriate in the current context.¹ This article highlighted very important issues that the impact of war not only affects the physical health and economics of the country but also causes long-term damage to mental health. Typically, the experience of war is assessed based on the sacrifices of soldiers, battles fought along national borders, and political victories and defeats. But this article goes beyond that limited perspective. The article strongly emphasizes how the war impacts the mental health and well-being of people in society, including cohesion, child development, education, the health system, employment opportunities, and the long-term stability of the community. From this perspective, the article possesses its own uniqueness, and I sincerely appreciate the authors' contribution.

One of the article's greatest strengths is its refusal to confine mental health to a narrow clinical framework. Instead, it boldly examines the broader social determinants that shape mental well-being in conflict zones. The article convincingly demonstrates that the consequences of war go far beyond PTSD, depression, or anxiety; they can devastate healthcare systems, shut down schools, destroy jobs, drive poverty and displacement, and perpetuate intergenerational deprivation. This holistic perspective aligns perfectly with global conversations on social determinants of health and delivers an urgent message: war is a fundamental driver of mental health crises. Furthermore, the authors' focus on vulnerable populations, children, women, the elderly, people with disabilities, minorities, and communities most affected by conflict rightly centres the discussion on equity and justice.

The article also stressed how news in the media about war influences people to have serious mental health issues. The news about the war can lead to some kind of fear, anxiety, and psychological instability among the common people,

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which can reduce the helping nature among the people.

The author also highlighted that the accessibility of the mental health service during war is very difficult. The author mentioned that the significant challenges of accessing healthcare services during the war, such as the demolition of healthcare infrastructure, distrust in medical institutions, the lack of qualified professionals, and financial constraints, are substantial barriers. That is how the authors emphasize to the readers the necessity of addressing these issues.

The article also focused on digitalized interventions for war survivors. The article also highlighted the importance of unique digitalized interventions for the survivors of wars. The article provided the example of chatbots in Ukraine, which offered mental health services. Additionally, this article mentioned the WHO's 'Doing What Matters in Times of Stress' (DWM). Digital guides empower individuals psychologically, even in times of crisis. These initiatives enhance a person's capacities through practices of mindfulness, learning, engagement in activities, and the restoration of social connection. In reality, in refugee camps or regions affected by terrorism where expert doctors, counsellors, and psychiatrists are not available, such digital solutions can at least provide a minimum level of psychosocial support to people. Recent studies also indicate that more than 80% of users have found chatbots to be useful, providing reassurance to readers. The main strength of the article focuses on the consequences of the wars, and it's not limited to clinical perspectives, but also encompasses social, economic, and educational aspects. Analysing through environmental factors is particularly distinctive. The authors have clearly explained the diverse impacts of war on women, minority communities, youth, and children. This raises awareness among readers and encourages community support.

The article tends to generalize the war experience. Not every war produces the same effects. For example, the border conflict in Ukraine, the civil war in Sudan, the prolonged conflict in Gaza, and the internal political unrest in Kashmir all have distinct psychological consequences.² The distress experienced by urban residents exposed to bomb

blasts cannot be equated with the suffering of rural refugees. The article does not sufficiently reflect this diversity. As a result, readers may come to perceive the term 'war' as representing a uniform experience.³ There is a lack of in-depth discussion on the experiences of minorities, women, children, and persons with disabilities.⁴ In reality, women are more likely to experience sexual violence, forced displacement, heavy family responsibilities, and inadequate access to health care. Children lose access to education, their social networks are disrupted, and their long-term development is hindered. Rather than being addressed only in brief paragraphs, these issues required deeper exploration. The article does not adequately discuss the limitations of digital initiatives. In war-affected regions, the lack of electricity, limited internet connectivity, language barriers, and low digital literacy levels pose significant challenges. In addition, data privacy concerns, information security, misuse of apps, and lack of cultural adaptability are pressing issues. By overlooking these, the article appears overly optimistic. The recommendations remain very general. Suggestions such as 'rebuilding hospitals' or 'restoring social bonds' are valuable, but the article does not clarify how these can be practically implemented. For instance, training nurses and doctors in primary health centres to provide psychosocial support, setting up counselling rooms in schools, developing digital applications in local languages, and involving refugee communities in decision-making processes would constitute more concrete and actionable recommendations⁵ with a specific focus on healthcare workers (HCWs).

Despite these gaps, the article has initiated an important discussion. Therefore, some points may be suggested for future research and writing. First, longitudinal studies are necessary, as the effects of war may not appear immediately but can persist for years. Second, implementation science should be employed to examine which interventions succeed in particular contexts and how they can be adapted to local cultures.⁶ Third, involving refugee communities, local women's associations, and youth groups at the planning stage is essential. This would make interventions more credible and sustainable.

One of the recent analysis of the anti-quota movement in Bangladesh in 2024, support the

argument presented in beyond the battlefield. Even though the incident did not happen in a conventional war zone, civilians experienced equivalent psychological consequences, including anxiety, fear, depression and post-traumatic stress. The curfew, violence and communication blackouts disrupted safety, social connectedness and access to important mental health services. The findings highlight that the mental health toll of collective violence outspreads beyond armed conflict, disturbing populations exposed to political unrest and human rights violations. Integrating such civilian perspectives into discussions on war related mental health can strengthen trauma informed and inclusive psycho-social interventions.

In summation, *Beyond The Battlefield: Understanding The Mental Health Impact of War* has several strengths: a comprehensive perspective, recognition of digital interventions, and acknowledgement of the long-term struggles of civilians. Yet, its weaknesses are also evident in insufficient depth of evidence, neglect of the diversity of wars, inadequate discussion of minority hardships, omission of the limitations of digital initiatives, and vague recommendations. If future works address these shortcomings, they can better position mental health as central to post-war reconstruction. Mental health should be understood as a right as fundamental as physical health, food, and shelter. Policymakers, researchers, and prac-

titioners must therefore develop integrated action plans. War is not only fought across borders; it is also a prolonged battle within the human mind. Ensuring that we do not lose this battle is a responsibility shared by us all.

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