Workplace Bullying and Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms: The Impact of Socioeconomic Status

Research on workplace bullying has found significant associations between exposure to workplace bullying and experiencing post-traumatic stress (PTSD) symptoms. However, the impact of socioeconomic status (SES) in this association has not been investigated. Our hypothesis is that individuals with lower SES would be more vulnerable and prone to report PTSD symptoms.

Design/Methodology
We used data from 563 Danish employees within a cross-sectional design. Exposure to workplace bullying was measured as exposure to negative acts and as labeling oneself as bullied. Information on PTSD symptoms was collected by using the Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R). SES was categorized as low, medium and high. General linear regression was applied.

Results
In line with previous cross-sectional studies, we observed that both negative acts and self-labeled bullying was associated with significantly higher PTSD symptoms. However, there were no significant differences in PTSD symptoms between different socioeconomic groups, when being exposed to workplace bullying.

Limitations
The study design was cross-sectional and it was not possible to adjust for other traumatic life events.

Research/Practical Implications
Targets of workplace bullying would benefit from interventions aiming to reduce the progression of PTSD symptoms.

Value
To our knowledge, this study is the first to study PTSD symptoms differences across socioeconomic groups among bullied. The study emphasizes that regardless of SES, workplace bullying is a severe phenomenon.

Speakers

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