There’s Lots of Pain in the World

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This issue of Psychiatric Annals, guest edited by Dr. Ali M. Hashmi, is entitled “Trauma Across Cultures: Assessment, Treatment, and Prevention,” and highlights the importance of understanding different cultural expressions of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depressive symptoms in patients from different backgrounds.

The first article, “Principles of Mental Health Intervention for Survivors of Major Disasters,” by Nicholas Holder, Dr. Alina Surís, Ryan Holliday, and Dr. Carol S. North reviews the mental health needs of communities after natural and man-made traumatic events. The authors urge clinicians to appropriately differentiate between distress and psychiatric disorders after a traumatic experience by implementing psychological “first aid.”


The next article, “A Reexamination of Military Sexual Trauma and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” by Dr. Meredith L. C. Williamson, Holliday, Holder, Dr. North, and Dr. Surís discusses the importance of accurately defining “military sexual trauma,” a term formally defined by the United States Congress, which can be a misapplied diagnosis in the context of PTSD.

The fourth article, “When Memories Become Malignant: An Update on Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Children and Adolescents,” by Drs. Nazish Imran, Imran Ijaz Haider, and Muhammad Waqar Azeem provides a comprehensive discussion of the assessment, diagnosis, comorbidities, and pharmacological treatment in children who have PTSD.

The last article, “Understanding Suicide Bombing Through Suicide Research: The Case of Pakistan,” by Dr. Murad Moosa Khan takes a look at the phenomenon of suicide terrorism. It approaches the topic through some of the models developed to study suicide. The article also highlights the commonalities and differences between suicide and suicide terrorism.

Yes, there’s a lot of pain in this world to be addressed by medicine in general and by psychiatry more specifically. The psychopathology for clinicians to consider seems to keep growing. We must stay abreast with the needs of all of our patients (no matter their background or culture) for effective treatment.