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## Ukrainian “Help” Profession Women: War and Location Status Impact on Well-Being

Dear Dr. Harvey,

Recent *Journal of Loss and Trauma* publications on the Russian–Ukrainian War report on university populations (Kurapov et al., 2022) and citizens of Ukraine relocated to Russia based on ethnic factors (Konstantinov et al., 2022). In this letter to the editor, attention is given to Ukrainian “help” profession university female students, faculty members, and staff to determine possible differences based on their location during violent confrontation. By mid-July, an estimated 5,024 civilians were killed and more than 6,500 seriously injured (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2022). The number of refugees has reached approximately 5,827,832 (UN Refugee Agency, 2022), and about 6,275,000 have been relocated within Ukraine (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2022).

Women predominate in the “help” professions. For example, most healthcare personnel are female (Reznik et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding the impact of war on the psycho-emotional conditions of female help professionals is important because of their possible professional and personal responsibilities (Khoshnood et al., 2017, p. 41).

Similar to papers mentioned above on the Russian–Ukrainian War, the Qualtrics software platform was used for this online survey. Data collection were based on three scales including a modified version of the Fear of War Scale (Kurapov et al., 2022), the Brief Resilience Scale (Smith et al., 2008), and the Short Burnout Measure (Malach-Pines, 2005). The scales used evidence Cronbach’s alpha score reliability.

A total of 623 female university students (72.5%) and faculty/staff (personnel; 27.5%) responded to this online survey. The study cohort consisted of women who remained in their home location regardless of the danger level (51.4%), relocated in Ukraine to avoid danger (29.8%), and left the country (18.8%). Among the survey respondents, 27.3% reported being secular and 48.9% married or with partner. The survey was conducted from May 5 to May 17, 2022, and involved 4 Ukrainian universities located in population centers affected by the war.

The mean age of the female respondents was 26.0 years ( $SD = 12.6$ ) with a range of 17 to 72 and a median age of 20 years. No significant differences were found for age by location status (not relocated [NR], internally relocated [IR], or out of the country [RF]):  $F(2, 607) = 0.203$ ;  $p = .816$ . The mean value of the fear-related responses for all respondents was 35.4 ( $SD = 7.6$ ). Regarding respondent location status, mean fear scores were as follows: NR = 35.4 ( $SD = 7.7$ ); IR = 36.9 ( $SD = 7.7$ ), and RF = 34.1 ( $SD = 7.6$ ),  $F(2, 574) = 3.116$ ;  $p = .045$ . No significant fear differences were found among university students and personnel,  $t(554) = 1.409$ ;  $p = .159$ , based on religiosity (i.e., secular and nonsecular),  $t(575) = 0.113$ ;  $p = .910$ , and marital/partner statuses,  $t(574) = 0.342$ ;  $p = .732$ .

No significant differences were found for resilience by location status:  $F(2, 568) = 1.488$ ;  $p = .227$ . However, students were found to have a lower level of resilience than personnel,  $t(559) = 3.102$ ;  $p = .002$ . The burnout mean score was 30.0 ( $SD = 7.0$ ).

Regarding location status, mean burnout scores were as follows: NR = 28.8 ( $SD = 6.5$ ); IR = 31.0 ( $SD = 7.1$ ); and RF = 31.3 ( $SD = 7.7$ ),  $F(2, 565) = 7.726$ ;  $p < .001$ . Burnout was found to be more prevalent among students,  $t(555) = 3.977$ ;  $p < .001$ , and those who reported to be secular,  $t(566) = 3.103$ ;  $p = .002$ . Two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed burnout associated with location and university (i.e., student/personnel) statuses:  $F(2, 551) = 3.955$ ;  $p = .020$ . RF status burnout is more common among students than personnel.

During the war, female substance use increased 46.5% for tobacco, alcohol, pain relievers, and/or sedatives. Based on location status, women who remained in place had the lowest increase (39.3%) compared to those who relocated in Ukraine (50.6%) and out of the country (59.3%;  $\chi^2(2) = 14.245$ ;  $p = .001$ ). Also, secular women reported more substance use (44.6%) than religious women (42.9%;  $\chi^2(1) = 7.460$ ;  $p = .006$ ); those who reported more substance use had higher fear,  $t(550) = 2.725$ ;  $p = .007$ , burnout,  $t(558) = 7.169$ ;  $p < .001$ , and loneliness,  $\chi^2(2) = 7.835$ ;  $p = .020$ , values as well as lower resilience,  $t(562) = 5.420$ ;  $p < .001$ .

Most Ukrainian female respondents (98.4%) reported deterioration of their psycho-emotional well-being with conditions of depression (88.0%), exhaustion (88.0%), loneliness (57.9%), nervousness (87.3%), and anger (78.0%). Significant differences were found for loneliness based on location status (50.3% vs. 60.7% vs. 74.1% for NR, IR, and RF, respectively;  $\chi^2(2) = 19.039$ ;  $p < .001$ ), university (61.7% vs. 46.1%;  $\chi^2(1) = 11.150$ ;  $p = .001$ ), religiosity (65.0% vs. 55.2%;  $\chi^2(1) = 4.568$ ;  $p = .030$ ), and marital/partner statuses (49.6% vs. 65.6%;  $\chi^2(1) = 15.062$ ;  $p < .001$ ) statuses. Also, survey respondents who reported loneliness had higher levels of fear,  $t(554) = 5.279$ ;  $p < .001$ , and burnout,  $t(563) = 11.066$ ;  $p < .001$ , as well as less resilience,  $t(567) = 6.822$ ;  $p < .001$ .

Female respondents who reported psycho-emotional well-being deterioration had higher levels of fear (Mann–Whitney  $U = 848.0$ ;  $p = .001$ ) and burnout (Mann–Whitney  $U = 945.0$ ;  $p = .001$ ), and lower levels of resilience (Mann–Whitney  $U = 827.5$ ;  $p = .001$ ). Regardless of location, university, religiosity, and marital/partner statuses, most respondents (62.0%) reported that during the war they have been eating more salt- and sugar-loaded, unhealthy food and have experienced weight gain (32.6%). Two-way ANOVA showed fear differences based on location status and unhealthy food intake:  $F(2, 548) = 3.097$ ;  $p = .046$ . Also, women who reported eating more salt- and sugar-loaded food had higher burnout,  $t(564) = 4.439$ ;  $p < .001$ , and lower resilience,  $t(566) = 3.101$ ;  $p = .002$ , values.

To our knowledge, this is the first study on the impact of the war and war-induced relocation on the mental and emotional well-being of Ukrainian “help” profession women. Survey findings evidence that relocation increases loneliness. Another significant finding related to location is that women relocating out of Ukraine were more likely to report increased substance use.

Both loneliness and increased substance use are associated with fear, stress, and burnout, and burnout level was found to be highest among those who left the country. Even though 72.7% of respondents reported being religious, survey results do not support the conclusion that religiosity is a protective factor in crisis situations (Salgado & Universidad Marcelino Champagnat, 2014).

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