ABSTRACT

Background

It has been reported that Nigeria has one of the highest road traffic accident (RTA) rates worldwide. Road traffic accidents are often complicated by psychological morbidity such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The magnitude of psychological trauma including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following road traffic accidents has not been adequately examined in Nigeria.

Aim

The aim of this study is to determine and compare the prevalence of PTSD among injured victims of road traffic accident (RTA) with that of two control groups from the general population. It equally examines the effect of sociodemographic variables on the prevalence of PTSD as well as the relationship between severity of injury sustained during the RTA and the presence of PTSD.

Method

The PTSD Module of Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI) instrument was used to assess current PTSD among the injured RTA victims and the two control groups from the general population. Injury severity among the injured victims of RTA was assessed using the Injury Severity Score (ISS).

Result

Forty (26.7%) of the 150 victims of RTA had PTSD as compared to 12 (8.0%) in the first control group (staffs of Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Enugu) and 13(8.7%) in the second control group (staffs of National Orthopaedic Hospital, Enugu) from the general population ($X^2 = 27.225$, df=2, $p=0.001$). Females experienced PTSD more than males among the RTA victims and in the two control groups. For the victims of RTA, ($X^2 = 3.896$, df= 1, $p = 0.048$), for the first control group, ($X^2 = 3.131$, df= 1, $p = 0.077$) and for the
second control group, \( (X^2 = 4.716, df= 1, p= 0.030) \). Victims of RTA who were employed experienced PTSD more than those who were not employed \( (X^2 = 17.935, df= 1, p= 0.001) \).

In the first control group, those who were not married experienced PTSD more than those who were married \( (X^2 = 5.574, df= 1, p= 0.018) \) and those with education below tertiary level experienced PTSD more than those with tertiary education \( (X^2 = 8.351, df= 1, p= 0.004) \).

The time frame post RTA showed that there was no significant difference in prevalence of PTSD among those who had RTA between 1 to 6 months and those who had RTA between 7 to 12 months \( (X^2 = 1.522, df= 1, p= 0.217) \). There was no statistical significant difference between the severity of injury sustained and the presence of PTSD \( (t=0.115, df=148, p=0.909) \).

**Conclusion**

The higher prevalence of PTSD among injured victims of RTA compared with the control groups from the general population indicates a need for the incorporation of consultation liaison psychiatry services into Trauma Units in this environment. This will ensure holistic approach in the management of victims of traumatic events like RTA.