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Dissociative identity disorder (DID) in the Brazilian population: a literature review

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Abstract: Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD), is a condition in which a person has two or more distinct personalities or states of consciousness that take turns controlling the person's behavior. These personality states can vary in age, gender, beliefs, preferences, and behavior and may involve memory loss from significant life events or significant periods. The exact cause is not yet known, but it is believed to be a response to traumatic experiences in childhood or at other times in life. Treatment includes psychotherapy, medication and occupational therapy to help people integrate their identity into a cohesive and functional person.

Keywords: Dissociative Identity Disorder. Child abuse. Trauma

1. Introduction

Dissociative identity disorder, also known as multiple personality disorder, is a rare and controversial mental illness that has been the subject of research and debate for decades. This condition is characterized by the presence within a single person of two or more distinct identities or personalities that alternately control behavior and consciousness.

Although the disorder was first described in the late nineteenth century, it is still poorly understood by the medical and scientific community. The lack of consensus on the diagnostic criteria, the difficulties in distinguishing the disorder from other mental conditions, and the stigma associated with the disorder contribute to the lack of research and information on the subject. Studies on dissociative identity disorder are scarce in Brazil, especially clinical case reports.

The national literature on the subject is scarce and limited, making it even more difficult to understand the prevalence and factors associated with this disorder. However,

international studies suggest that the prevalence of dissociative identity disorder ranges from 0.01% to 1% of overall population, suggesting that it is not as rare as previously thought. In addition, the condition is more common in women than in men and may be related to traumatic childhood experiences, such as physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.

Given the complexity and complexity surrounding dissociative identity disorder, it is important that there be more research and discussion on the subject, especially in the Brazilian context, which can provide valuable input for researchers and mental health professionals who wish to understand and improve the diagnosis and treatment of patients suffering from it.

2. Theoretical backgrounds

2.1 Prevalence and risk factors of dissociative identity disorder (DID)

The prevalence of DID is difficult to determine, as the condition is often misdiagnosed or underdiagnosed. In addition, the mystical nature of the condition makes it difficult for researchers to determine the actual number of cases. The prevalence in the general population is estimated at less than 1%, although the numbers are limited by studies and research subjects and may be varied (FARIA, 2017).

Risk factors are complex and may include physical, sexual, or emotional abuse in childhood, especially in recurrent or long-lasting cases. In addition, emotional or psychological trauma, such as the death of a loved one, separation from parents, or abandonment, can trigger or contribute to the development of DID. Other risk factors may include genetic susceptibility, personality disorders, and the presence of other dissociative or psychiatric disorders (BIANCO, 2020).

Some studies suggest that DID is more common in women than in men, which may be due to differences in diagnostic accuracy between men and women. In addition, they are often accompanied by other psychiatric disorders, such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and personality disorders (FRED R. VOLKMAR, 2018).

Diagnosis can be difficult because symptoms can be confused with other disorders, such as mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and schizophrenia. The diagnosis is usually made by a psychiatrist trained in dissociative disorders, who can thoroughly assess the patient's history and symptoms. Treatment includes cognitive behavioral therapy, personality integration therapy, exposure therapy, and drug therapy, depending on the severity of symptoms (FARIA, PRADO, SOUZA, MARTINS, & FERREIRA, 2019).

Therefore, DID is a rare and controversial psychological condition that involves the presence of two or more distinct identities or personalities in a person. Although prevalence in the general population is difficult to determine, risk factors may include childhood abuse, emotional or psychological trauma, and other psychiatric disorders. Diagnosing and treating DID can be difficult, but a trained psychiatrist can help diagnose and treat the symptoms and associated risk factors. In addition, public awareness and education can help reduce stigma and improve access to proper diagnosis and treatment for people living with the disease (BAPTISTA, 2019).

2.2 Child abuse and dissociative identity disorder (DID)

Child abuse can have serious and lasting effects on a child's personality development and ability to cope with stress and trauma. Children who are victims may experience a range of negative emotions, including fear, anger, sadness, and shame, which can make it difficult to establish healthy relationships and trust others (PERRY & SZALAVITZ, 2020).

DID is often associated with child abuse, especially if it occurs repeatedly or over a long period of time. This can create a mismatch between aspects of consciousness, memory, identity, or perception of oneself and the environment that characterizes DID. In addition, it may be a risk factor for other

dissociative disorders, anxiety disorders, depression, and personality disorders (FERREIRA, 2021).

Symptoms include unexplained memory, passage of time, sudden changes in mood and behavior, inner voices and visions, intrusive thoughts and feelings, and self-destructive behavior. These symptoms can significantly affect the quality of life of people with DID and make it difficult to maintain healthy relationships, keep a job, or perform daily activities (ALMEIDA, RIBEIRO, & BENEDETTI, 2020).

Treatment usually involves an integrated, individualized approach, including cognitive behavioral therapy, personality integration therapy, exposure therapy, and pharmacological treatment. The goal of treatment is to help people manage symptoms, develop healthy coping skills, and gain a sense of control over their lives (GULISZ & VIEIRA, 2022).

Awareness and prevention of child abuse are essential to reduce the risk of developing DID and other mental disorders. Abused children need proper care and psychological treatment to deal with the consequences of their trauma. Adult victims should seek professional help to deal with the ongoing impact of abuse on their lives and prevent the development of mental disorders, including DID (ALMEIDA, RIBEIRO, & BENEDETTI, 2020).

Therefore, child abuse is a significant risk factor for the development of dissociative identity disorder and other mental illnesses. Preventing child abuse and providing appropriate treatment to victims is critical to reducing the risk of developing and improving people's mental health and overall well-being. In addition, increasing public awareness of DID and dissociative disorders will help reduce stigma and improve understanding and access to appropriate treatment for those affected (GULISZ & VIEIRA, 2022).

3. Methodology

The following research contains a qualitative and explanatory quantitative approach, seeking to study dissociative identity disorder in relation to the Brazilian population according to the general objective of the research.

In the first instance, qualitative research was carried out that has as occupation the investigation of qualitative events, with theoretical references without many restrictions containing greater opportunity in the manifestation for the subjectivity of the researcher Pereira (2004, p.19). Following this line of reasoning, Silva and Menezes (2001, p. 20) bring the conclusion that qualitative research "considers that there is a dynamic relationship between the real world and the subject, that is, an inseparable link between the objective world and the subjectivity of the subject that cannot be translated into numbers."

Severino (2007, p. 11 8), defines that quantitative research, part of the traditional view of research, where he explains in relation to science, that "every scientific law was clothed in mathematical formulation, expressing a quantitative relationship. Hence the original characteristic of the scientific method is its experimental-mathematical configuration." The explanatory research aims to identify the determining factors

that contribute to the occurrence of certain phenomena, deepening the knowledge of reality because it explains the reason and why of things.

4. Results and Discussion

The prevalence of DID was found in approximately 1% of the population, suggesting that it is a relatively rare condition. However, it is important to note that DID is often underdiagnosed and confused with other disorders, underestimating its true prevalence.

The results also indicate that it is more common in women than in men, consistent with previous studies on the subject. However, it is important to note that the results should be interpreted with caution, as the research sample may be limited in terms of representativeness of the general population.

Risk factors include child abuse, domestic violence, and childhood and adolescent trauma. These factors are consistent with previous research on this topic, highlighting the importance of prevention and early intervention in cases of child abuse and other forms of trauma.

In addition, research has shown that DID is often associated with other psychiatric disorders, such as anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, and personality disorders. These results suggest that it is a complex and multifaceted disease that requires a holistic therapeutic approach.

Regarding the clinical implications, this study highlights the importance of careful evaluation of patients with dissociative symptoms, especially those with a history of childhood trauma and abuse. Healthcare providers need to be aware of the risk factors for DID and other dissociative disorders so they can make accurate diagnoses and refer patients to specialists.

Therefore, this study highlights the importance of public awareness of DID and other dissociative disorders to reduce stigma and improve understanding and access to appropriate treatment. It is important to note that stigma around DID and other dissociative disorders can impede treatment and greater public awareness can reduce this barrier.

5. Conclusion

It can be assumed that DID is a rare condition, it affects a significant number of people and is more common in women. In addition, it is often associated with other psychiatric disorders and has proven to be a complex and multifaceted disorder that requires a holistic therapeutic approach.

With regard to child abuse, childhood trauma can lead to the development of DID and other dissociative disorders. Highlighting the importance of public awareness, prevention and early intervention for incidents of child abuse to reduce the risk of developing DID.

Finally, public awareness of DID and other dissociative disorders is important to reduce the stigma surrounding these conditions and ensure that those affected receive adequate treatment. Healthcare providers need to be aware of risk

factors and other dissociative disorders so they can make accurate diagnoses and refer patients to specialists. Public awareness and early intervention can help reduce the impact of other dissociative disorders on people's lives.

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