

Majority of hardest hit populations excluded from trauma research

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New study reveals just over 12 percent of traumatic stress studies published in 2012 were conducted in low-to-middle income countries (LMICs), where 83 percent of the world's population lives, and where risk of experiencing a potentially traumatic event is often greatest.

Many of the world's most at-risk populations are being omitted from the vast majority of research being conducted into traumatic stress, reveals a study out this week in the *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*.

Among the study's key findings: just over 12 percent of traumatic stress studies published in 2012 were conducted in low-to-middle income countries (LMICs), where 83 percent of the world's population lives, and where risk of experiencing a potentially traumatic event is often greatest.

Traumatic stress can be triggered by large scale happenings like mass violence, war, terrorism and natural disaster, as well as by personal tragedies, such as the loss of a loved one or a traffic accident, explains co-author Kinga Fodor, a psychologist and Ph.D. student at the Department of Clinical Psychology, Semmelweis University, Budapest. "Reports show that there is a huge unmet need for [mental health](#) aid in LMICs, much of which stems from traumatic stress," she adds. "And the body of research that does exist is often of little help in informing effective [mental health care](#) practices in these countries."

To achieve adequate mental health care systems around the world, the report states, research into posttraumatic mental health should be just as

global as the impact of the phenomenon.

The authors sought to discover the degree to which recent research is: 1) conducted in LMICs, 2) conducted by researchers in LMICs, and 3) accessible to LMICs. The report is the result of a systematic search of peer-reviewed papers on traumatic stress published in 2012.

The report came about as a result of an event held during the 2013 European Society for Traumatic Stress Studies conference. Called "Young Minds Paper in a Day", the event is intended to encourage international collaboration among young [mental health professionals](#). The report was authored by mental health researchers from Australia, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Serbia, Spain, the UK, and the United States.

The initiator of the research, Dr. Eva Alisic, who leads the Trauma Recovery Lab at the Monash Injury Research Institute at Monash University, Australia, said that the team itself encountered challenges in accessing research papers for the report: "Conducting the study showed us again how important open access of research findings is. Especially mental health professionals and researchers in the most affected areas in the world should be able to benefit from the knowledge that we currently have about trauma and recovery."

More information: Is traumatic stress research global? A bibliometric analysis, Kinga E. Fodor, Johanna Unterhitzenberger, Chia-Ying Chou, Dzenana Kartal, Sarah Leistner, Maja Milosavljevic, Agnes Nocon, Laia Soler, Jenifer White, Seonyoung Yoo, Eva Alisic. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology* 2014, 5: 23269 . [dx.doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v5.23269](https://doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v5.23269)

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