ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER
Volume - 14 | Issue - 04 | April - 2025 | PRINT ISSN No. 2277 - 8179 | DOI : 10.36106/ijsr
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

THE IMPACT OF FACIAL TRAUMA ON PSYCHIATRIC WELL-BEING: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

Psychiatry

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ABSTRACT

Facial trauma is widely acknowledged for its physical implications, but its psychological and psychiatric consequences have not been explored extensively in clinical research. This study aims to assess the mental health outcomes associated with facial trauma, particularly the prevalence of PTSD, depression, body dysmorphic disorder (BDD), and social anxiety. A cohort of 150 individuals with facial trauma was evaluated using a combination of psychiatric assessments and psychological surveys. The study found that 68% of individuals with facial trauma exhibited symptoms of PTSD, 55% displayed signs of depression, and 30% were diagnosed with BDD. These findings suggest a significant mental health burden for individuals who have experienced facial trauma, necessitating a multidisciplinary approach in treatment.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION:

Facial trauma encompasses injuries sustained to the face, including fractures, lacerations, and burns, which can result in disfigurement, functional impairments, and substantial physical rehabilitation. While much attention has been paid to the physical recovery of these injuries, the psychiatric impact is often underexplored. Disfigurement of the face—being a primary point of social interaction—has profound effects on self-esteem, social functioning, and mental health. Psychiatric conditions, particularly PTSD, depression, and body dysmorphic disorder, are common sequelae of facial trauma. This study investigates the psychiatric impact of facial trauma, specifically examining the prevalence of these disorders among individuals affected by facial injuries.

METHODS:

A total of 150 participants who had sustained facial trauma between 2018 and 2023 were recruited from a multi-center trauma hospital. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 65, with 72 males (48%) and 78 females (52%). Exclusion criteria included a history of pre-existing psychiatric disorders, neurological conditions, or cognitive impairments.

Psychiatric evaluations were conducted using the following instruments:

- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS-5).
- **Depression:** Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II).
- **Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD):** Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale Modified for BDD (Y-BOCS-BDD).
- **Social Anxiety:** Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS).

In addition, participants were asked to complete self-report questionnaires on perceived quality of life (QoL) and social reintegration post-injury.

RESULTS:

The results of the study demonstrated a substantial psychiatric burden in individuals with facial trauma. Detailed statistics from the psychiatric assessments are shown in **Table 1.** The most common psychiatric conditions observed were PTSD (68%), depression (55%), and social anxiety (47%). BDD was diagnosed in 30% of participants, with women showing a higher prevalence than men.

Table 1: Prevalence of Psychiatric Disorders in Participants with Facial Trauma

Psychiatric Disorder	Percentage of Affected Participants (%)	Gender Distribution (%)
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	68%	60% Female, 40% Male
Depression	55%	53% Female, 47% Male
Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD)	30%	80% Female, 20% Male
Social Anxiety	47%	55% Female, 45% Male

Further analysis revealed significant differences in psychiatric outcomes based on the severity of the facial injury. **Table 2** shows that individuals with severe facial trauma (e.g., extensive fractures, burns) were more likely to develop PTSD and depression compared to those with mild to moderate injuries.

Table 2: Psychiatric Outcomes by Severity of Facial Trauma

Injury Severity	PTSD (%)	Depression (%)	BDD (%)	Social Anxiety (%)
Severe (Multiple fractures, burns)	82%	70%	35%	55%
Moderate (Single fracture, mild laceration)	56%	44%	28%	38%
Mild (Minor cuts or bruises)	40%	30%	18%	25%

Social reintegration was significantly affected, with 62% of participants reporting difficulties in returning to work or social activities. Female participants were particularly affected by social isolation, with 72% reporting high levels of distress about social interactions compared to 53% of males.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study underscore the significant psychological burden associated with facial trauma. PTSD emerged as the most prevalent condition, likely due to the traumatic nature of the events leading to facial injuries, such as accidents, assaults, or violence. The high rates of depression and social anxiety suggest that the emotional impact of facial trauma extends beyond physical rehabilitation. Moreover, body dysmorphic disorder appears to be more common in individuals with severe facial trauma, particularly among females, which is consistent with previous research suggesting a greater concern for appearance among women.

Interestingly, the severity of the injury correlates strongly with

psychiatric outcomes. More severe injuries, such as multiple fractures or burns, are associated with higher rates of PTSD, depression, and social anxiety. This may be due to the more significant disfigurement and longer recovery periods associated with severe injuries.

Our study also highlights the need for an integrated approach to treatment, combining physical reconstruction with psychological support. While reconstructive surgery can address the physical consequences of facial trauma, mental health interventions are critical for addressing the psychological and social challenges these individuals face.

CONCLUSION

Facial trauma is not only a physical injury but also a significant psychiatric concern. The high prevalence of PTSD, depression, BDD, and social anxiety in individuals with facial injuries points to the need for a more comprehensive approach to treatment. Clinicians should consider both the physical and psychological recovery of individuals with facial trauma, with particular attention to the social and emotional ramifications of facial disfigurement. Further research is needed to develop targeted therapeutic interventions that address both the physical and mental health needs of these patients.

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