Taking issue with trauma

by Ashraf Kagee and Arancha Garcia Del Soto

**Do psychiatrists understand the consequences of the violence and human rights abuses suffered by IDPs? What happens when the hegemonic Western psychiatric model of traumatisation is applied to IDPs?**

We need to move from a unidimensional psychiatric analysis of the effects of internal displacement towards a broader and indigenous paradigm. In order to be respectful, empathic and non-pathologising, researchers require new skills in order to convey empathy without projecting a sense of pathology onto the respondent. There is an ongoing need for research that takes into account local contexts through the collaborative efforts between mental health professionals, relief workers, academic researchers and, most importantly, IDPs themselves. Methodological approaches that consider local contexts and personal meanings of IDPs are likely to yield important data in determining the psychosocial needs of the displaced.

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