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Narrative exposure therapy as an intervention to promote resiliency in refugee children and youth with PTSD**Anne Mantini¹, Nazilla Khanlou² and Morton Beiser¹**¹St. Michael's Hospital, Canada²York University, Canada

Statement of the Problem: Refugee children and youth have among the highest rates of PTSD in the world and they make up over half of the population of refugees. Growing evidence suggests that promotion of resiliency is an important component to improvement of symptoms and optimal adaptation.

Purpose: This study examined the efficacy of Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) treatment, on symptom patterns and development of resiliency, for children and youth with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) compared with untreated children in a Wait List Control group (WLC) participating in a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT). Measures of behavior and adaptive development were also utilized. Follow up evaluations were repeated at 3, 6 and 12 months after completion of a course of NET.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: 300 refugee children and youth (7-25 years of age) with a DSM-V diagnosis of PTSD were randomly assigned to weekly NET sessions (8-12) or the WLC group. The UCLA-PTSD trauma history and reaction index were used to evaluate their symptoms and outcome while measures of behavior, resiliency, post-traumatic growth and adaptation are also administered at regular intervals.

Findings: Significant benefits were realized from the course of NET sessions. Scores from clinical symptoms declined immediately during the course of NET sessions while the PTSD growth and resiliency increased significantly compared to baseline and in relation to the control group. At each post-intervention evaluation point, up to twelve months, refugee children and youth demonstrated benefits through resiliency, positive growth and improved PTSD symptoms.

Conclusions: This is the first reported study to show benefits gained in resiliency from treatment of PTSD with NET among refugee children and youth. Given the high prevalence of PTSD in refugee children and youth, intervention that addresses clinical symptoms and supports resiliency and post-traumatic growth is essential.

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