Impact of Torture on Medical Care: Part 2

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Outline

• Part 1
  – What is torture?
  – How is it relevant to current issues?
• Part 2
  – How do you use the information?
  – What resources are available?
Torture History

• “In what country were you born?” then “Can you tell me what made you leave your country?”

• “Did you ever experience physical or mental suffering that was deliberately inflicted by a soldier/police/rebel groups? Or seen others attacked/beaten?”

• “Have you ever been arrested or put in jail?”

• “Have you ever had problems because of your tribe, political beliefs, religion, or gender?”

• “How did you get this scar?”
## Medical conditions related to torture

### Table. Medical Conditions Related to Torture and Ill Treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Conditions</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronic pain (very common)</td>
<td>Somatization</td>
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<td>Musculoskeletal pain following beatings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Chest pain”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Peripheral neuropathy</td>
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<td>Head trauma (very common)</td>
<td>Chronic headaches</td>
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<td>Cognitive impairment, memory impairment</td>
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<td>Seizures</td>
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<td>Vertigo, dizziness</td>
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<td>Facial fractures, scarring</td>
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<td>Telefono—hard slap to ears resulting in rupture of tympanic membranes,</td>
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<td>hearing loss</td>
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<td>Nerve injuries</td>
<td>Brachial plexus injuries resulting from suspension</td>
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<td>Peripheral neuropathy from beatings</td>
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<td>Handcuff neuropathy</td>
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<td>Sexually transmitted diseases</td>
<td>Human immunodeficiency virus</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chlamydia, gonorrhea</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Syphilis</td>
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<td>Hepatitis B and/or C</td>
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<td>Chronic genital pain from trauma</td>
<td>Urethral strictures requiring surgical repair</td>
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<td>Chronic pelvic inflammatory disease</td>
<td>Chronic pelvic pain after sexual assault</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sequelae from female genital mutilation</td>
<td>Infections, sexual dysfunction, pain, infertility</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Crosby, JAMA 2013

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140673601058445/images?imgeld=gr3&sectionType=green](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140673601058445/images?imgeld=gr3&sectionType=green)
Anticipate and prevent re-traumatization
Positional Torture, MRI scanners

http://www.revcom.us/i/abughaib.jpg

http://www.cedars-sinai.edu/Patients/Programs-and-Services/Imaging-Center/Preparing-for-Your-Exam/MRI-with-patient.jpg
Electrical Torture, ECGs, EMGs


Starvation, Dieting or NPO

No Food No Drink

After Midnight

http://openclipart.org/detail/188337/npo-midnight-by-arvin61r58-188337
Nursing or rehab facility

http://www.keiro.org/keiro-nursing-home

Give Control Back to Patients

“Empowerment is a fundamental principle of psychological recovery.”
Center for Victims of Torture Psychological Services

- Patient control over answering questions
- Permission prior to exam
- Allow patient to stop or delay procedures if possible
- Acknowledge patients choice in medication adherence
“Torture survivors frequently need help in understanding the links among torture, emotional effects, and effects on the body. Survivors are usually relieved to hear they are not abnormal, weak, or crazy, and their symptoms are a normal human reaction to extreme stress. . .”

Healing the Hurt, Center for Victims of Torture
Northwest Health and Human Rights

- Funding from the Office of Refugee Resettlement under its Torture Victims Rehabilitation Act
- Patient referrals: 206-816-3230

International Medicine Clinic, HMC

International Counseling & Community Services (ICCS)

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP)
Asylum seekers

- Document torture history with medical evaluation and affidavit
- Should not be done by primary care physician
- Recommend asylum network training

http://healthright.org/

Examing Asylum Seekers
A Clinician’s Guide to Physical and Psychological Evaluations of Torture and Ill Treatment
revised & updated, 2012

http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/asylum/
Case: Ms. M

48 y/o Oromo-speaking woman with h/o torture and HIV, who presents with insomnia, fatigue, headaches, chronic pain.
Summary

• Torture is prevalent around the world

• Explain chronic physical and psychiatric symptoms

• Prevent re-traumatization

• Asylum seekers
References

- Crosby. Primary care management of non-English speaking refugees who have experienced trauma. JAMA. 2013; 310(5):519-528.