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Çocukluk dönemi duygusal istismarının
yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkileri: Bir
sistematiik literatür taraması

The effects of childhood emotional abuse on mental
health in adulthood: A systematic literature review

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ÖZ

Bu araştırmanın amacı, çocukluk dönemi duygusal istismarının (ÇDDİ) yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkilerine ilişkin mevcut literatürü sistematik bir şekilde incelemektir. Araştırma sürecinde, ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkilerine ilişkin yayımlanan makaleler, detaylı bir şekilde taranmış ve belirli dahil etme ve hariç tutma kriterlerine göre bulgular, sistematik bir biçimde sentezlenmiştir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunun belirlenmesinde PRISMA raporundan faydalanılmıştır. 29 Ekim-21 Kasım 2024 tarihleri arasında PubMed, Wiley Online Library, Sage Journals ve TR Dizin veri tabanlarında yapılan taramalarda 986 araştırma makalesine ulaşılmıştır. Bu makaleler arasında dahil edilme kriterlerine uygun olarak 15 makale, araştırmanın çalışma grubunu oluşturmuştur. Çalışmalar, yayımlanma yıllarına, araştırmanın yapıldığı ülkeye, araştırmanın amacına, örneklemine, ölçme araçları ve sonuçlarına göre incelenmiştir. ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkilerine ilişkin en çok çalışma, 2024, 2023 ve 2021 yıllarında yapılmıştır. Çalışmalar, ÇDDİ ile depresyon, anksiyete, travma sonrası stres bozukluğu, psikotik semptomlar, paranoyak düşünceler, intihar düşünceleri, duygu düzenleme güçlükleri, bilişsel semptomlar, sosyal destek, ruminasyon, dissosiyasyon, erken maladaptif şemalar, kişiler arası sorunlar, obezite ve alkol kullanımı gibi ruh sağlığıyla ilişkili çeşitli psikolojik değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri incelemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmaların örneklem büyüklükleri, 72 kişiden 34653 kişiye kadar değişmektedir. Çalışmalarda en yaygın kullanılan ölçme araçları, Çocukluk Çağı Travma Anketi ve Çocukluk Çağı Travma Anketi-Kısa Formu'dur. ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkilerinin incelenmesinde, depresyon en fazla odaklanılan değişken olmuştur. Çalışmaların sonuçları, ÇDDİ'nin, bireylerin ruh sağlığını uzun vadeli ve kalıcı bir şekilde etkileme potansiyeline sahip önemli bir risk unsuru ve psikolojik bozuklukların şiddetini artırıcı kritik bir etken olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Araştırmanın sonuçları, ilgili literatür ışığında tartışılmış ve gelecekteki çalışmalar için önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: çocukluk dönemi duygusal istismarı, yetişkin ruh sağlığı, sistematik derleme

ABSTRACT

This study aims to conduct a systematic review of the current literature examining the impacts of childhood emotional abuse (CEA) on mental health in adulthood. The research process involved a thorough analysis of published articles addressing the consequences of CEA on mental health in adulthood, with findings systematically synthesized based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Utilizing the PRISMA report, between October 29 and November 21, 2024, database search in PubMed, Wiley Online Library, Sage Journals, and TR Index yielded 986 research articles. Among these, 15 articles fulfilled the inclusion criteria. The selected studies were scrutinized based on publication year, research locale, study objectives, sample characteristics, assessment tools, and the results. The majority of studies were conducted in 2024, 2023, and 2021. The studies were conducted to examine the associations between CEA and various psychological variables related to mental health such as depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, psychotic symptoms, paranoid thoughts, suicidal ideation, emotion regulation difficulties, cognitive symptoms, social support, rumination, dissociation, early maladaptive schemas, interpersonal problems, obesity and alcohol use. The sample sizes of studies ranges from 72 to 34653 participants. The most frequently utilized measurement instruments in the studies were the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire and the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form. In the investigation of the effects of CEA on mental health in adulthood, depression emerged as the most extensively examined variable. The results of the studies underscored CEA as a significant risk factor with the potential for having long-lasting and profound impacts on individuals' mental health, as well as being a crucial element in exacerbating psychological disorders. The results of the study were interpreted, and suggestions for future investigations were proposed.

Keywords: childhood emotional abuse, adult mental health, systematic review

INTRODUCTION

Childhood maltreatment is a widely recognized serious public health concern with annual reports indicating that millions of children worldwide experiencing various forms of victimization (Gilbert et al., 2009; Gilbert et al., 2012; Kessler et al., 2010; Taillieu et al., 2016). Research on different aspects of this problem has predominantly focused on the effects of physical and sexual abuse (Ackner et al., 2013; Adams et al., 2018; Bifulco et al., 2002; Christ et al., 2019; Egeland, 2009). The distinct and long-term impacts of emotional abuse on mental health have been examined by a limited number of studies (Aviles et al., 2022; Watts et al., 2021). However, childhood emotional abuse (CEA) is the most prevalent and psychologically detrimental form of childhood maltreatment (Moulding, 2017; Wang et al., 2023).

According to Wright's (2007) investigation, emotional abuse forms the foundation for all other forms of childhood maltreatment and neglect, and is among the most prevalent types of abuse experienced by children. Corroborating this claim, a global study conducted by Moody et al. (2018) investigated self-reported childhood maltreatment rates. Their findings revealed that the incidence of physical abuse varied between 5.0% and 40.2%, while sexual abuse ranged from 2.5% to 29.8%, and emotional abuse spanned from 6.5% to 53.8%. Thus, the findings indicate a potentially higher prevalence of psychological abuse in comparison to other forms of abuse. Similarly, previous meta-analyses have documented the prevalence rates of various forms of childhood maltreatment. Specifically, Stoltenborgh et al. (2011) reported a rate of 127 per 1000 for childhood sexual abuse, while Stoltenborgh et al. (2013) found a rate of 226 per 1000 for childhood physical abuse. Furthermore, Stoltenborgh et al. (2012) observed a rate of 363 per 1000 for CEA, underscoring the considerable frequency of this adverse childhood experience. Therefore, empirical evidence suggests that CEA can manifest independently or concurrently with other forms of abuse, exhibiting a higher frequency of occurrence (Claussen & Crittenden, 1991; Korolevskaia & Yampolskaya, 2023).

Within the literature, CEA is alternatively conceptualized as childhood psychological abuse (Duman, 2019; Kwan & Kwok, 2021; Xiao et al., 2023b) characterizing it as adult-perpetrated actions that detrimentally impact a child's personality formation and hinder their psychosocial advancement (Arslan, 2016). In this context, CEA encompasses a range of behaviors that impede the fulfillment of a child's fundamental psychological necessities, including affection, recognition, validation, and a sense of security. These harmful actions may manifest in various forms, such as degradation, intimidation, scapegoating, neglect, coercion, and the imposition of responsibilities that exceed the child's developmental capacity (Christ et al., 2019; Hart & Brassard, 1991). CEA encompasses diverse forms of expression, ranging from verbal to nonverbal, deliberate to unintentional, and proactive to passive (Xiao et al., 2023a).

Compared to other forms of abuse, CEA presents unique challenges in detection due to its less overt nature and absence of physical indicators (Bernstein et al., 2003; Fung et al., 2020; Iwaniec et al., 2006) as well as has potential for severe and long-lasting consequences on affected individuals (Jung & Soo, 2023; Kwok et al., 2013; Van Landeghem & Jakobson, 2024). Research indicates that CEA may predispose individuals to a range of psychological disorders in adulthood including; depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), personality disorders, and other mental health conditions (Amianto et al., 2018; Arslan, 2016; Christ et al., 2019; de Mattos Souza et al., 2016; Duprey et al., 2021; Gardner et al., 2019; Olgiati & Serretti, 2022; Schlensog-Schuster et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023; Watts et al., 2021; Xiao et al., 2024). In this context, the findings of Kuo et al. (2015) demonstrated a significant association between CEA and the intensity of borderline personality disorder traits, with emotion regulation difficulties serving as a mediating factor in this relationship. Concurrently, Salokangas et al. (2019) observed in their investigation that CEA was linked to various psychological issues, including depressive symptoms, anxiety disorders, and substance use problems.

Research indicates that the consequences of emotional abuse extend beyond mental health disorders, impacting psychological well-being in multifaceted ways. Furthermore, individuals

who have endured psychological maltreatment may encounter a more complex life trajectory, characterized by psychological barriers, interpersonal trust issues, and relational trauma-induced challenges (Fuchshuber et al., 2018; Mertens et al., 2021). In this framework, previous studies have demonstrated that such traumatic experiences can detrimentally influence an individual's overall well-being, interpersonal connections, and daily functioning. (Domke et al., 2023; Spertus et al., 2003). For example, research by Arslan (2015) indicates that psychological abuse has a direct impact on social connectedness and sense of belonging, while indirectly influencing psychological resilience through these mediating variables. In a related study, Chambers (2024) explored the consequences of CEA on adult social functioning and help-seeking behaviors, uncovering an inverse relationship between the severity of emotional abuse and both social functioning and help-seeking tendencies.

Despite the empirical evidence garnered from research elucidating the enduring consequences of emotional abuse, the scholarly discourse on this topic remains insufficient (Aviles et al., 2022; Moulding, 2017). Further studies are required to gain a comprehensive understanding of the multidimensional nature of this prevalent and detrimental type of abuse, as well as its lasting impacts on individuals' mental health (Jung & Soo, 2023; Watts et al., 2021). In this context, it is posited that this study, which synthesizes and systematically examines the existing literature on the impacts of CEA on mental health in adulthood, will make significant contributions to the field both theoretically and practically. Moreover, the study is anticipated to facilitate the understanding of the psychological effects of CEA and promote more comprehensive research on this subject. Furthermore, this review is anticipated to contribute to the development of effective interventions by providing specific suggestions for clinical application, thereby supporting the rehabilitation processes of individuals exposed to CEA. The implementation of such measures is considered to bolster societal endeavors in raising awareness and enhancing protective strategies against child abuse, while facilitating the formulation of more extensive public health initiatives. Consequently, this systematic review study is regarded to be of significant importance in relation to the overall mental health of individuals and society.

METHOD

Research Model

This study is a systematic review study, investigating the current body of literature regarding the impacts of CEA on mental health in adulthood. Systematic review is a methodological approach in which studies meeting predefined eligibility criteria are collected and examined to address a specific research question. This process involves the systematic collection and presentation of the characteristics and findings of the selected studies (Higgins & Green, 2011). In this study, literature searches were conducted across multiple databases, including PubMed, Wiley Online Library, Sage Journals, and TR Index databases. Studies meeting predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria were subsequently subjected to systematic evaluation within the scope of the research.

Research Group

A comprehensive search conducted across the PubMed, Wiley Online Library, Sage Journals, and TR Index databases for the period 2015-2024 yielded a total of 986 research articles. These articles were subsequently evaluated based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in a final sample of 15 research articles that met the study's criteria.

Data Collection Tool

An "Article Review Form" has been developed to review research articles. This instrument is designed to facilitate a structured examination of the literature surveyed within the study, with the objective of enhancing the research's validity and reliability (Büyüköztürk et al., 2019). The

form encompasses information including the research title, authors, year of publication, country of origin, research objectives, sample, scales, and findings obtained from the study.

Literature Review and Selection Process

The PRISMA report was used to determine the study group (Moher et al., 2009) and a structured literature review was conducted between 29 October and 21 November 2024. Turkish and English research articles, related to the impacts of CEA on mental health in adulthood, were searched in PubMed, Wiley Online Library, Sage Journals and TR Index. The literature review was conducted to ascertain the scope of relevant studies in accordance with the predetermined keywords. Table 1 presents the keywords utilized in the literature review.

Table 1

Keywords Used in Literature Review

Childhood emotional abuse	Mental health in adulthood
Emotional abuse	Mental health
Psychological abuse	Depression
Psychological maltreatment	Anxiety disorder
Emotional maltreatment	Post-traumatic stress disorder
Psychological violence	Panic disorder
Childhood emotional abuse	Bipolar disorder
Childhood psychological maltreatment	Eating disorder
Psychological victimization	Schizophrenia
Domestic emotional abuse	Psychosis
Psychological domestic violence	Suicidal ideation
	Suicide attempt
	Substance abuse
	Non-suicidal self-injury
	Social anxiety disorder

The selection of keywords was informed by an examination of search terms employed in prior studies investigating the impacts of CEA on mental health in adulthood (Berube et al., 2023; Yellow et al., 2016; Xiao et al., 2023a). The article titles were examined for the presence of at least one keyword associated with the CEA as well as at least one keyword pertaining to adult mental health. Accordingly, the Boolean operators 'OR' and 'AND' were employed to concatenate keywords. This systematic approach resulted in the identification of 986 relevant studies. To establish the study group, a set of predefined inclusion criteria were implemented. These inclusion criteria are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Inclusion Criteria of the Research

Inclusion criteria
The title incorporates one of the keywords associated with childhood emotional abuse.
Identifying one of the keywords associated with adult mental health.
Published in PubMed, Wiley Online Library, Sage Journals or TR Index databases.
Written in Turkish or English.
Published between 2015-2024.
Full-text accessibility.
Consisting of participants aged 18 and over.
Examining emotional abuse independently from child abuse.

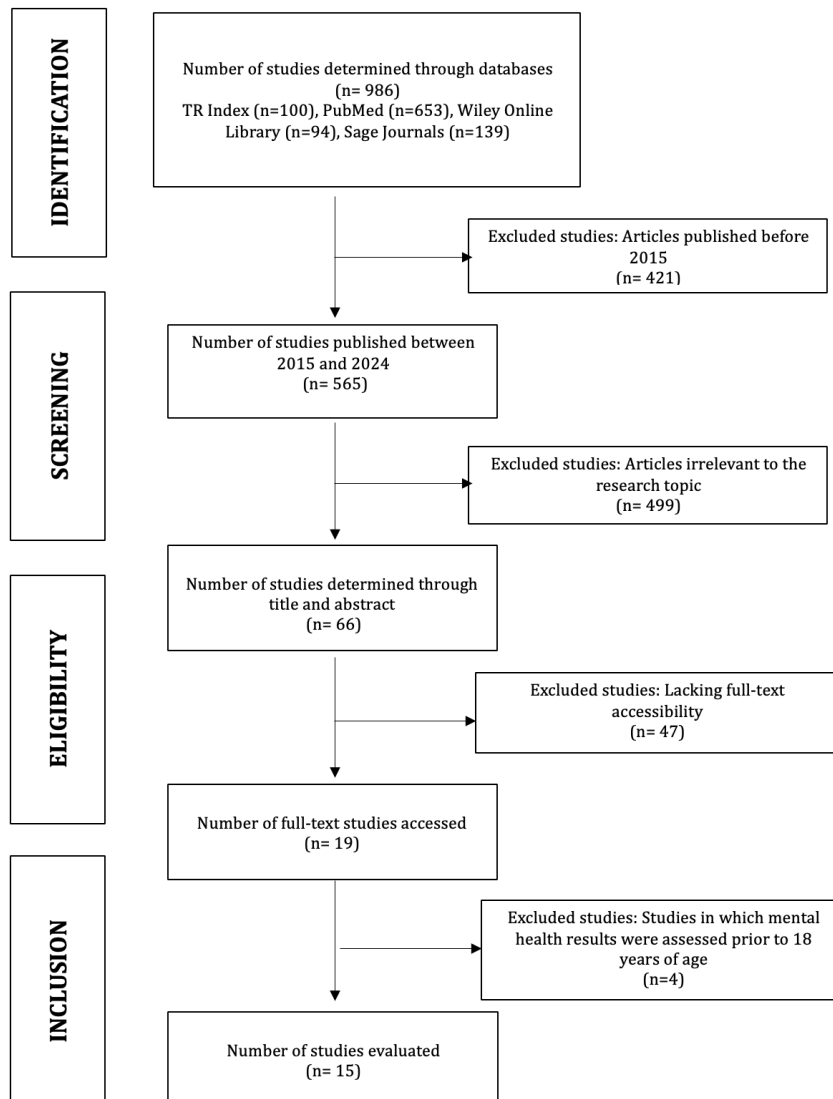
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In this investigation, a single instance of replicated studies was incorporated. The research scope excluded various types of publications that unable to satisfy the inclusion criteria. These encompassed letters, book chapters, book reviews, editorial content, review articles, meta-analytical studies, and research papers lacking full-text accessibility. Hence, the search utilizing pertinent Turkish and English keywords across specified databases yielded a total of 986 articles. Following the evaluation process, adhering to predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, 565 studies were examined considering the years of publication. The preliminary assessment of titles and abstracts yielded 66 studies potentially relevant for further investigation. Among these, 19 studies with accessible full texts underwent thorough examination. During the comprehensive review, four studies were excluded due to their focus on participants below 18 years of age, as mental health outcomes were assessed prior to adulthood. Consequently, 15 studies were included in the systematic review. The flow chart for the identification and selection of these studies is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

PRISMA Flow Chart of the Studies Examined within the Scope of the Research



Note. Adapted from Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., & Altman, D. G. (2009). Methods of systematic reviews and meta-analysis preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2009.06.005>

Research Ethics

All the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed in the entire process from the planning, implementation, data collection to the analysis of the data. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Actions" have been carried out.

During the writing process of this study, scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed; no falsification was made on the collected data and this study was not sent to any other academic media for evaluation.

Research ethics committee approval information

Since this study is a systematic literature review, it does not fall under the category of studies requiring Ethical Committee Approval. Therefore, Ethical Committee Approval has not been declared.

RESULTS

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of the methodological characteristics and key findings from the studies incorporated in the systematic review. Table 3 provides a detailed overview of each included study, encompassing information such as the researcher's identity, publication date and origin, research objectives, participant demographics, measurement tools utilized, and results.

Table 3

General Characteristics and Results of the Studies Reviewed

Study Researcher(s) Year/ Country	Purpose	Participants	Measurement Tools	Results
de Filippis et al. (2024) Italy	To examine the mediating role of aberrant salience (AS) in the relationship between childhood trauma and psychotic sympathy.	222 participants (33 patients diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder, 189 patients diagnosed with schizophrenia) 140 M, 82 F	Aberrant Salience Inventory (ASI), Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form (CTQ-SF), Positive and Negative Symptom Scale (PANSS)	CEA has been found to have a significant influence on AS. In addition, CEA has been demonstrated to be effective on positive psychotic symptomatology through AS.
Grave et al. (2021) Germany	To examine the mediating role of psychopathology in the association between childhood maltreatment and perceived social support within a sample of patients diagnosed with depressive disorder (DD) and borderline personality disorder (BPD).	179 participants (110 DD, 69 BPD) 137 F, 42 M	CTQ, Social Support Questionnaire (F-SozU), Quick Inventory of Depressive Symptomatology (QIDS-SR), BPD symptom severity (BPD-Checklist)	The results indicated a negative correlation between childhood emotional abuse (CEA) and social support in the borderline personality disorder (BPD) group. Conversely, no statistically significant association was observed between CEA and social support in the depressive disorder (DD) group.

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Study Researcher(s) Year/ Country	Purpose	Participants	Measurement Tools	Results
Mertens et al. (2021) Spain	To examine dissociation and insecure attachment as parallel mediators in explaining the relationship between childhood emotional abuse and paranoid traits.	89 undergraduates (61.8% female)	Interview for Traumatic Events in Childhood (ITEC), Relationship Questionnaire (RQ), Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES-II), Schizotypal Personality Questionnaire (SPQ), Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV Axis II Disorders (SCID-II)	CEA was found to be positively correlated with paranoid traits, dissociation, obsessive and fearful attachment styles. The relationship between CEA and both interview-based and self-reported paranoid traits was significantly mediated by dissociation and obsessive attachment.
Xiao et al. (2024) China	To investigate the association between childhood psychological abuse and psychopathology symptoms, including depression, anxiety, anger, physical aggression, and hostility, and to determine whether these associations differ based on gender.	544 participants (63.2% female)	Psychological Maltreatment Review (PMR), Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), Clinical Anxiety Scale (CAS), Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire-Physical Aggression sub-scale	Psychological abuse and psychological neglect demonstrated a more pronounced effect on psychopathology, whereas the absence of psychological support was solely associated with depression and anxiety. Research has indicated an inverse relationship between psychological support and hostility in male subjects. Furthermore, childhood psychological abuse exhibited positive correlations with depression, anxiety, anger, physical aggression, and general psychopathology symptoms.
Zhang et al. (2024) China	To investigate the association between CEA and obesity and the mediating effects of anxiety, depression, and bulimia on this relationship.	74 participants 37 obese patients (27 F, 10 M) 37 healthy control group participants (28 F, 9 M)	CTQ, Beck Anxiety Inventory, Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), Eating Disorder Inventory (EDI)	Individuals in the obesity group exhibited significantly higher levels of bulimia, anxiety, depression, and CEA compared to participants in the healthy control group. Furthermore, CEA has been demonstrated to be associated with obesity, with anxiety, depression, and bulimia serving as mediating factors in this relationship.
Domke et al. (2023) Germany	To examine whether CEA is associated with cognitive symptoms of adult depression, and to test whether CEA and rumination predict cognitive	72 psychiatric patients experiencing a current phase of depression (49 F, 23 M)	CTQ, BDI-II, Response-Style-Questionnaire (RSQ-D), Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS)	CEA has been demonstrated to exhibit associations with cognitive symptoms, rumination, and hopelessness. Research has indicated that rumination serves as a mediator in the relationship between CEA and cognitive symptoms. The findings suggest that CEA constitutes a risk

Study Researcher(s) Year/ Country	Purpose	Participants	Measurement Tools	Results
	symptoms and hopelessness.			factor for the development of cognitive symptoms, rumination, and hopelessness, particularly in adult depression.
Xiao et al. (2023b) China The United Kingdom	To investigate the impact of childhood psychological abuse and neglect profiles on mental health and overall well-being across diverse national contexts (China and the United Kingdom).	China: 544 participants (63.4% female) United Kingdom: 589 participants (63% female)	Psychological Maltreatment Review (PMR), Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), Clinical Anxiety Scale (CAS), Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)	The impact of emotional abuse was found to be comparable in the samples from China and the United Kingdom. Profiles characterized by low levels of emotional abuse ("Psychological non-support" in China and "Low-maltreated" in the UK) were associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, and aggression, as well as higher levels of self-esteem. Furthermore, profiles exhibiting high levels of emotional abuse ("Severe-maltreated" in China and "Severe-maltreated" in the United Kingdom) were associated with higher levels of depression, anxiety, and aggression, in addition to low self-esteem.
Wang et al. (2023) China	To investigate the mediating effects of rumination, experiential avoidance, and depression on the relationships between CEA and suicidal ideation and non-suicidal self-harm.	1254 Chinese undergraduates (617 F)	CTQ-SF, Non-suicidal self-injury questionnaire (NSSI), Suicidal ideation (SI), Ruminative response scale (RRS), Acceptance and action questionnaire-II (AAQ-II), Zung self-rating depression scale (Zung SDS)	Research findings indicate that individuals with CEA experience exhibited higher rates of suicidal ideation and non-suicidal self-harm compared to those without such experiences. Furthermore, the study revealed that the associations between CEA and suicidal ideation and non-suicidal self-harm are mediated by rumination, experiential avoidance, and depression.
Olgiati and Serretti (2022) The USA	To investigate the association between post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and childhood maltreatment (parental neglect, emotional, physical and sexual abuse), bipolar spectrum	482 adult patients diagnosed with major depression (144 M, 338 F)	Mini-International Neuropsychiatry Interview (M.I.N.I.), Inventory of Depressive Symptomatology-Clinician Rating (IDS-C ₃₀), Quick Inventory of Depressive Symptomatology (QIDS-C ₁₆), Concise Associated Symptoms Tracking	Individuals in the PTSD group exhibited elevated levels of depression, impaired functioning, anxiety comorbidity, and increased suicidal ideation. PTSD has been demonstrated to be associated with persistent suicidal tendencies following treatment. CEA has been correlated with

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Study Researcher(s) Year/ Country	Purpose	Participants	Measurement Tools	Results
	and antidepressant treatment outcomes.		(CAST), Concise Health Risk Tracking (CHRT), Altman Self-Rating Mania Scale (ASRM), Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS), Psychiatric Diagnostic Screening Questionnaire (PDSQ), Childhood Maltreatment Questionnaire (CMT)	increased bipolar spectrum features and symptoms of hypomania in adult mental health.
Zhu et al. (2022) China	To examine the impact of childhood psychological abuse and neglect on the mental health of university students during the COVID-19 pandemic.	181 undergraduates (65 M, 116 F)	Child Psychological Abuse and Neglect Scale, Mental Health Self-Report Questionnaire (SRQ-20)	A statistically significant positive correlation was observed between childhood psychological abuse and neglect and mental health problems during the pandemic. Childhood psychological abuse and neglect have been associated with higher SRQ-20 scores. It has been determined that the "reproving" aspect of childhood psychological abuse serves as a potential risk factor for the development of psychological difficulties.
Gama et al. (2021) Brazil	To investigate the influence of various types of childhood maltreatment, both individually and in combination, on subsequent re-victimization and the severity of PTSD symptoms.	443 students (79% female)	Trauma History Questionnaire (THQ), Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5), CTQ-SF	Childhood maltreatment, particularly emotional abuse, has been demonstrated to have a strong association with re-victimization and the severity of PTSD symptoms. Furthermore, childhood maltreatment has been shown to exert long-term effects on psychological well-being by exacerbating PTSD symptoms in adulthood. Research indicates that CEA has been found to increase the severity of PTSD by 77%.
Can et al. (2019) Türkiye	To examine the relationship between childhood trauma, early maladaptive schemas (EMS) and alcohol use disorder (AUD).	220 male AUD patients, 108 healthy male participants	Sociodemographic Data Form, CTQ-28), Young Schema Questionnaire (YSQ-SF), Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test (MAST)	The findings indicated that the prevalence of emotional abuse, physical abuse, and neglect during childhood was higher in the AUD group. Research has demonstrated that emotional abuse exerts significant adverse effects on adult mental health, particularly by exacerbating the severity of AUD and contributing to the deterioration of

Study Researcher(s) Year/ Country	Purpose	Participants	Measurement Tools	Results
Christ et al. (2019) Holland	To examine the impact of CEA on depressive symptoms, emotion regulation difficulties, and interpersonal problems.	276 female undergraduates	CTQ-SF, Quick Inventory of Depressive Symptoms (QIDS-SR-16), Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS), Inventory of Interpersonal Problems (IIP-32)	emotion regulation and coping strategies. CEA has been found to be associated with depressive symptoms and emotion regulation difficulties. In addition, it was determined that the effect of CEA on depressive symptoms was mediated by emotion regulation difficulties and interpersonal problems.
Taillieu et al. (2016) The USA	To examine the effects of emotional abuse, emotional neglect and both emotional abuse and emotional neglect on adult mental health in childhood.	34653 people, representing the U.S. general population. 2004-2005 data of National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC)	Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, Alcohol Use Disorder and Associated Disabilities Interview Schedule-Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)-Fourth Edition (AUDADIS-IV)	All categories of emotional abuse demonstrated robust associations with other forms of child abuse and a family history of dysfunction. Emotional abuse (particularly in instances where multiple forms are experienced concurrently) has been linked to an increased prevalence of lifetime diagnoses of Axis I (e.g., depression, anxiety) and Axis II (e.g., borderline personality disorder) disorders.
Khan et al. (2015) The USA	To examine the effect of childhood abuse on depression risk and to provide an alternative explanation to the ACE study.	560 young adults (223 M, 337 F)	Maltreatment and Abuse Chronology of Exposure Scale (MACE), Traumatic Antecedents Interview, Conflict-Tactic Scales, CTQ, ACE Score, Kellner Symptom Questionnaire (SQ), Symptom Checklist 90 (SCL-90) and SCL-90-Revised, Adult Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (ASIQ), Structured Interview Guide to the Hamilton Depression Scale (SIGH-SAD), Limbic System Checklist-33 (LSCL-33), Structured Clinical Interviews for DSM-IV Axis I and II Psychiatric Disorders	The research findings indicate that the primary determinants of depression risk differ between genders at age 14, with nonverbal emotional abuse being most significant for males and peer emotional abuse for females. These factors were found to be more influential than the cumulative types of maltreatment experienced during childhood. Additionally, the study revealed that suicidal ideation is partially associated with nonverbal and peer emotional abuse at age 14. However, the strongest correlations were observed between suicidal thoughts and parental verbal abuse at age 5 for males, and sexual abuse at age 18 for females.

As presented in Table 3, an analysis of the publication years of the studies included in the review revealed that three studies were published in each of the years 2024, 2023, and 2021; two studies

were published in each of 2022 and 2019; and one study was published in each of 2016 and 2015. With regard to geographical distribution of the studies, China was the most represented, with five studies (Wang et al., 2023; Xiao et al., 2023b; Xiao et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2022). The United States followed with three studies (Khan et al., 2015; Olgiati & Serretti, 2022; Taillieu et al., 2016), while Germany contributed two (Domke et al., 2023; Grave et al., 2021). Single studies were conducted in Italy (de Filippis et al., 2024), Spain (Mertens et al., 2021), the United Kingdom (Xiao et al., 2023b), Brazil (Gama et al., 2021), the Netherlands (Christ et al., 2019), and Türkiye (Can et al., 2019). Furthermore, it was observed that one study within this body of research was conducted collaboratively with participants from the United Kingdom and China (Xiao et al., 2023b). The results of the investigation indicated that the majority of studies examining the impacts of CEA on mental health in adulthood were conducted in China.

The relationship between CEA and adult mental health disorders has been a focal point of numerous investigations, despite variations in research objectives. Prominent areas of inquiry in this field include the examination of depressive disorders (Domke et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2024), anxiety-related conditions (Taillieu et al., 2016; Xiao et al., 2024), and PTSD (Gamma et al., 2021; Olgiati & Serretti, 2022). Additionally, researchers have explored the connection between CEA and psychotic symptoms (e.g., de Filippis et al., 2024), paranoid traits (Mertens et al., 2021), and other psychopathological manifestations, such as suicidal ideation (Wang et al., 2023). These topics have consistently emerged as primary subjects of investigation within the broader context of CEA's long-term psychological impact on mental health in adulthood. In addition, several studies have discussed the impacts of CEA on psychological processes such as social support in adulthood (Grave et al., 2021), emotion regulation difficulties (Christ et al., 2019), and cognitive symptoms (Domke et al., 2023). Moreover, various models have incorporated mediating factors, including dissociation (Mertens et al., 2021) and rumination (Wang et al., 2023), to explicate the impact of emotional abuse on psychological outcomes. Additionally, research has been conducted to comparatively analyze the interactions between mental health and overall well-being of CEA across various cultural and geographic contexts, such as China and the United Kingdom (Xiao et al., 2023b). Among the examined research, depression has emerged as the predominant focus and most thoroughly investigated variable of CEA in relation to mental health outcomes in adulthood.

The studies examined comprise diverse participant groups, with sample sizes ranging from 72 individuals (Domke et al., 2023) to 34653 individuals (Taillieu et al., 2016). The studies frequently demonstrate a gender imbalance in participant distribution, with female subjects typically outnumbering males; for instance, in the study conducted by Gama et al. (2021), 79% of the participants were women. Nevertheless, one study comprised exclusively male participants (e.g., Can et al., 2019), while another study consisted solely of female participants (Christ et al., 2019). Furthermore, a limited number of investigations have reported sex ratios approaching equilibrium (e.g., Wang et al., 2023). The majority of research on CEA has been conducted utilizing non-clinical samples. Research utilizing clinical samples has primarily concentrated on psychopathological disorders and their ramifications for mental well-being. As an illustration, de Filippis et al. (2024) carried out their research with a cohort of 222 individuals diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder and schizophrenia. On the other hand, Taillieu et al. (2016) utilized data in their investigation from a substantial sample of 34653 individuals, which is representative of the United States general population. The findings revealed that the impacts of CEA on mental health in adulthood may exhibit considerable variation in terms of sample size and the distinction between clinical and non-clinical populations.

In the studies examined within the scope of the research, diverse measurement tools were used to investigate the relationship between CEA and mental health in adulthood. Among the most frequently utilized instruments are the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire and the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form. These instruments have been extensively employed to assess CEA, particularly in relation to childhood traumas (Domke et al., 2023; Grave et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023). Instruments such as the Beck Depression Inventory and the Quick Inventory of

Depressive Symptomatology were utilized to measure depressive symptoms (Olgiati & Serretti, 2022; Zhang et al., 2024). Additionally, anxiety assessment instruments such as the Beck Anxiety Inventory and the Clinical Anxiety Scale, which quantify anxiety levels, have been consistently incorporated into research studies. (Xiao et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). For the evaluation of specific psychological processes, notably dissociation and rumination, researchers utilized more specialized assessment tools, including the Dissociative Experiences Scale and the Ruminative Response Scale (Mertens et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023). The selection of assessment tools in various studies is influenced by their specific objectives and sample sizes. To illustrate, more advanced instruments, including the Schizotypal Personality Questionnaire and the Inventory of Depressive Symptomatology-Clinician Rating, have been utilized in several investigations to evaluate psychopathological disorders (Mertens et al., 2021; Olgiati & Serretti, 2022). These findings demonstrate that studies utilize a range of assessment tools to evaluate various psychological processes and symptoms, thereby comprehensively addressing mental health outcomes.

Empirical evidence indicates that CEA has substantial and enduring impacts on adult mental health (Taillieu et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2024). Notably, investigations have revealed a strong link between emotional abuse and various psychopathological manifestations such as; depression, anxiety, anger, aggression, suicidal ideation, PTSD symptoms, and emotion regulation difficulties (Christ et al., 2019; Olgiati & Serretti, 2022; Xiao et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023). Studies have also reported that CEA affects not only psychological disorders but also emotional and cognitive processes, leading to problems including rumination, hopelessness, and deterioration in attachment styles (Domke et al., 2023; Mertens et al., 2021). Another significant consideration is that the magnitude of emotional abuse correlates positively with the severity of its effects on mental health. Specifically, individuals subjected to high levels of emotional abuse demonstrate increased manifestations of depression, anxiety, and aggressive behavior, coupled with reduced self-esteem. Conversely, those experiencing lower levels of emotional abuse exhibit less pronounced psychological impacts. (Xiao et al., 2023b). In addition, it has been observed that lack of psychological support and internal behavioral problems can cause the negative effects of CEA to be long-term (Xiao et al., 2024). Furthermore, research has indicated that the absence of psychological support and the presence of internal behavioral issues may contribute to the prolonged negative effects of CEA (Xiao et al., 2024). These findings collectively suggest that CEA represents a significant risk factor with long-term and enduring impacts on individuals' mental health. Moreover, emotional abuse appears to exacerbate the severity of psychological disorders in comparison to individuals with more robust psychological well-being.

DISCUSSION

CEA emerges as the most prevalent and psychologically detrimental form of child abuse, yet it remains the least investigated area (Moulding, 2017). CEA, imperceptible and neglected form of trauma (Bernstein et al., 2003; Iwaniec et al., 2006), has the potential to substantially influence an individual's psychological well-being throughout their lifetime, and lead to serious mental disorders in the long term (Duprey et al., 2021; Kwok et al., 2013; Van Landeghem & Jakobson, 2024; Xiao et al., 2024). Despite its critical importance, the current literature on this subject remains inadequate, highlighting the necessity for additional scholarly inquiry (Aviles et al., 2022; Jung & Soo, 2023; Watts et al., 2021). To this end, this investigation conducts a systematic review of extant literature concerning the impact of CEA on mental health in adulthood, providing a comprehensive overview of practices in this domain. The analysis involves 15 scholarly articles, which were scrutinized based on their publication years, geographical origin, research objectives, participant demographics, assessment tools, and empirical outcomes.

Research on the effects of CEA on mental health in adulthood has increased significantly in recent years. The years 2021, 2022, and 2023 have emerged as the period during which publications on the subject reached their highest frequency. This increase stems from heightened awareness regarding emotional abuse's profound impact on psychological well-being (Bentz et al., 2024; Xiao

et al., 2023a). Besides, the surge in scholarly attention to the topic may be attributed to the fact that prior investigations, while demonstrating the enduring and detrimental impacts of CEA on adult psychological well-being, emphasize the insufficiency of current studies and underscore the necessity for further exploration in this field (Aviles et al., 2022; Jung & Soo, 2023; Moulding, 2017; Schlensog-Schuster et al., 2024; Watts et al., 2021). Furthermore, societal transformations in recent years, particularly unprecedented circumstances such as the global pandemic, may have rendered the effects of CEA on individuals' mental health more apparent, potentially leading to an intensification of research on the subject (Zhu et al., 2022). While these factors collectively contribute to the increase in the number of studies published, they also underscore the necessity for future research to be more in-depth and comprehensive (Grave et al., 2021).

The geographical distribution of studies examining the relationship between emotional abuse and mental health elucidates the varying levels of interest in this topic across different regions. A notable finding is the substantial concentration of investigations conducted in China, highlighting the prominence of CEA as a critical issue in this country. Indeed, child abuse, particularly emotional abuse, is a prevalent problem in China, and the number of research examining its adverse effects has increased in recent years (Fang et al., 2015; Kwan & Kwok, 2021). These studies have stated that CEA can have serious impacts on individuals' mental health (Li et al., 2016). On the other hand, the collaborative investigation conducted by researchers from China and the United Kingdom (Xiao et al., 2023b) highlights the critical role of cross-cultural comparative analyses. These intercultural examinations enable a more nuanced comprehension of the disparities and parallels in perceptions of emotional abuse and mental health across different societies (Xiao et al., 2023a). In this regard, subsequent investigations will enhance our comprehension of the association between CEA and psychological well-being from a more comprehensive standpoint. This will be achieved by conducting an in-depth analysis of the psychological ramifications of emotional abuse and exploring how cultural and geographic variations influence the interpretation and mental health consequences of such traumatic experiences. Meanwhile, the scarcity of research conducted on this subject in Türkiye highlights a notable deficiency in academic scholarship within this domain. This accentuates the necessity for increased scholarly investigation on the subject in the Turkish context.

An analysis of the studies revealed that depression emerged as the predominant variable investigated among the effects of CEA on mental health in adulthood, indicating that depression constitutes the most widespread and obvious long-term consequence of emotional abuse on psychological well-being. Childhood represents a crucial period for an individual's emotional and psychological development, and traumatic events experienced during this period have the potential to inflict lasting impacts on the brain's emotional processing mechanisms (Teicher, 2002). Depression frequently manifests as a consequence of such trauma (Domke et al., 2023; Spertus et al., 2003); the prevalence of depressive symptoms, particularly in individuals exposed to CEA, exacerbates this phenomenon (Xiao et al., 2024). On the other hand, CEA can lead to diminished self-confidence, feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, and a negative worldview in affected individuals; consequently, this may contribute to the development of depression (Arslan & Kanak, 2022; Çelik & Odaci, 2020; Fuchshuber et al., 2018). Besides, CEA can impair individuals' capacity to regulate emotions, potentially leading to the development of psychopathological conditions such as depression (Christ et al., 2019). Furthermore, depression is a prevalent condition in clinical practice, reflecting the effects of CEA (Arslan, 2016). Therefore, researchers may have considered depression as a central variable in understanding the psychological effects of emotional abuse. This consideration can also provide a foundation for comprehending the relationship between depression and other psychopathological symptoms (such as anxiety, and PTSD) (Gardner et al., 2019; Olgiati & Serretti, 2022). This robust association between depression and CEA indicates that research in this domain should encompass not only clinical symptomatology but also factors such as psychosocial adjustment, quality of life, and psychological well-being of individuals. This underscores the necessity of conducting future investigations with a more comprehensive approach.

The extensive sample sizes and heterogeneous participant groups in the reviewed studies make a substantial contribution to elucidating the impact of CEA on mental health in adulthood. Although the varying sample sizes (ranging from 72 to 34653 participants) enable the generalization of research findings at different levels, they also highlight certain limitations regarding the scope of these studies. In these investigations, studies involving clinical groups typically comprise smaller sample sizes, whereas studies representing the general population generally encompass larger sample sizes (Inozu et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2023). Given that clinical samples typically comprise individuals with specific psychopathological disorders or mental health conditions, the effects of CEA are examined through more precise psychological parameters in studies conducted with these populations. For instance, de Filippis et al. (2024) investigated the impact of abuse on severe psychological disorders, conducting research with 222 patients diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder and schizophrenia. While such studies provide valuable insights into psychopathology, the findings are limited to individuals with similar psychological conditions and are therefore challenging to generalize to broader populations (Korkut, 2003). Nonclinical samples, conversely, investigate the effects of CEA on more prevalent mental health concerns and generally encompass a broader demographic. For example, Taillieu et al. (2016) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the effects of CEA on the general population, utilizing a substantial sample of 34653 individuals. Although such expansive sample sizes contribute to increased generalizability, they primarily illuminate overarching societal trends and influences, rather than facilitating a detailed exploration of participants' specific psychopathological attributes (Taillieu et al., 2016). Furthermore, in studies with large samples, the influence of various socioeconomic and demographic factors may be mitigated, suggesting that results could potentially differ for specific subgroups. At this juncture, the gender distribution within the samples warrants consideration as a significant factor. The differential effects of gender on emotional abuse and mental health between males and females necessitate the examination of gender's role in such studies (Scher et al., 2004).

An examination of the gender distribution in relevant studies, in line with previous research (Li et al., 2016), reveals a predominance of female participants (Grave et al., 2021; Mertens et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2022). This gender imbalance in study populations may potentially constrain the research's capacity to accurately capture and represent sex-based variations in the findings. While studies indicate that women are more likely to report their exposure to CEA (Öztürk et al., 2020; Pruessner et al., 2019), research examining in detail the effects of men's exposure to this type of abuse on mental health remains limited. This observation may support the hypothesis that men exhibit a lower awareness of emotional abuse and demonstrate less willingness to report such experiences (Baker & Festinger, 2011; Comechanha et al., 2017; Moulding, 2017; Xiao et al., 2020). However, it also indicates that research on the impact of emotional abuse on men is of increasing significance (Khosravani et al., 2019). In conclusion, sample size, participant diversity, and gender distribution are critical factors in comprehending the relationship between CEA and mental health. Utilizing samples that represent both clinical and general populations facilitates the investigation of various facets of this relationship. Furthermore, adequate sample size and gender balance contribute to the broader applicability of the results obtained. Further research is warranted to examine the effects of emotional abuse on diverse demographic groups in greater depth. It is imperative to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the consequences of abuse and treatment approaches, particularly considering gender disparities and other socioeconomic variables. Additionally, it is essential to note that additional research is necessary regarding the impact of emotional abuse on male populations.

The diverse measurement instruments utilized in the studies examined within the scope of this research facilitate a multidimensional analysis of CEA and associated psychological processes, particularly symptoms such as depression, anxiety, dissociation, and rumination. This diversity enables a more comprehensive understanding of each psychological condition by evaluating it through multiple perspectives. Specifically, instruments such as the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) and CTQ-Short Form (CTQ-SF) have been extensively utilized to assess

childhood traumas. In corroboration of this finding, Xiao et al. (2023a) reported that CTQ and CTQ-SF were the most frequently utilized measurement instruments in research, as evidenced by their systematic review study examining the effects of childhood emotional maltreatment on adult mental health. These assessment tools, evaluating significant traumatic events such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, emotional neglect, and physical neglect, enable researchers to more comprehensively examine the impacts of childhood traumas on mental health in adulthood, demonstrating their efficacy in measuring CEA and other traumatic events (Christ et al., 2019; Grave et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2015). While existing instruments are commonly employed to assess emotional abuse, there is a pressing need for more specialized tools to evaluate its intricate and persistent consequences. Subsequent investigations should prioritize the utilization of more comprehensive and multidimensional assessment methodologies to address these limitations and accurately measure emotional abuse. Such an approach may ultimately enhance the precision and efficacy of therapeutic interventions.

The studies reviewed have demonstrated that CEA has enduring and profound impacts on mental health in adulthood (Taillieu et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2024). Similarly, previous research has revealed that emotional abuse yields prolonged and detrimental consequences on mental health (Jung & Soo, 2023) and suggested that it is strongly associated with psychopathological symptoms such as depression and PTSD (Arslan, 2016; Gardner et al., 2019; Spertus et al., 2023; Van Landeghem & Jakobson, 2024). Within this framework, the research conducted by Watts et al. (2021) revealed that emotional maltreatment during childhood exhibits a substantial direct effect on PTSD as well as indicated that this relationship is mediated through cognitive mechanisms, specifically event centrality and intrusive rumination. Khosravani et al. (2019), on the other hand, illuminated the intricate relationship between CEA intensity and depressive symptomatology, with emotion regulation difficulties serving as a mediating factor. Their findings demonstrated that as the magnitude of CEA escalated, its deleterious impact on individuals' mental health became increasingly pronounced. Indeed, research has demonstrated that individuals who experienced higher levels of emotional abuse exhibited increased levels of depression, anxiety, and aggression, while their self-esteem decreased (Xiao et al., 2023b). These studies have also provided evidence that CEA affects more complex cognitive and emotional processes, as well as psychopathological symptoms, and potentially lead to a significant deterioration in individuals' overall quality of life (Domke et al., 2023; Mertens et al., 2021). Furthermore, they emphasized that emotional abuse has long-lasting effects on individuals' emotional and physical functioning, increasing their susceptibility to traumas, which consequently facilitates the development of mental disorders (Spertus et al., 2003). On the other hand, research has consistently shown that clinical populations experience higher rates of CEA exposure compared to the general population (Xiao et al., 2023a) and revealed a robust link between CEA and various clinical disorders, including depression, personality disorders, and eating disorders (Amianto et al., 2018; de Mattos Souza et al., 2016; Kuo et al., 2015; Salokangas et al., 2019).

Research has revealed that the impacts of childhood traumas on mental health not only shape the lives of individuals but also serve as risk factors that contribute to the increased prevalence of psychopathological conditions (Schlensog-Schuster et al., 2024). Additionally, studies have elucidated that emotional abuse engenders profound and long-lasting detrimental effects, not only on individuals but also on societal and familial frameworks, with consequences that extend across multiple generations (Aviles et al., 2022). In short, these studies have highlighted that CEA is a significant risk factor with the potential to impact individuals' mental health in a long-term and enduring manner, and it represents a crucial factor that exacerbates the severity of psychological disorders. The findings underscore the critical role of early intervention strategies in mitigating the consequences of psychological traumas. Subsequent investigations should explore in greater depth the complex relationship between CEA and various biological, psychological, and environmental factors. Additionally, these studies should aim to elucidate the protracted effects of CEA across diverse clinical populations. Moreover, research efforts should focus on enhancing societal and familial recognition of early trauma indicators, as well as

promoting timely intervention strategies. Such initiatives may ultimately contribute to improved long-term health outcomes for affected individuals.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review offers a thorough examination of the current research exploring the impact of CEA on mental health in adulthood, yielding noteworthy findings. While the findings indicate an increase in studies on emotional abuse, they corroborate the assessment that further research is necessary in this domain. Subsequent investigations should explore the implications of CEA more extensively through cross-national studies, accounting for cultural and geographic disparities. The scarcity of research in this domain, particularly within the Turkish context, is a matter of significance. Enhancing the quantity of scholarly investigations on this topic in Türkiye is of paramount importance. Furthermore, the robust correlation between depression and emotional abuse suggests that, in addition to clinical symptoms, factors such as psychosocial adjustment, quality of life, and psychological well-being of individuals warrant investigation. In this context, it is imperative that future research be conducted utilizing a more comprehensive approach. Current measurement instruments exhibit limitations in assessing the effects of emotional abuse; there is a necessity to develop more comprehensive and multidimensional tools capable of evaluating the complex and long-term consequences of emotional abuse. Through such advancements, it may be feasible to enhance the efficacy of therapeutic interventions. Furthermore, future research should investigate more thoroughly the interaction of emotional abuse with biological, psychological, and environmental factors. Such studies should emphasize increasing societal and familial awareness regarding the early indicators of trauma. Consequently, these investigations may contribute to improved long-term mental well-being. They may more effectively address the impact of CEA and these traumas on mental health and enhance treatment modalities.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations of this review warrant consideration. Primarily, the scope of included studies is restricted to those indexed in particular databases, potentially excluding noteworthy research. Additionally, the review's scope was restricted to publications with accessible full-text versions in Turkish or English, potentially excluding noteworthy findings presented in other languages from the analysis. While the studies reviewed encompass geographical, cultural, linguistic, and demographic diversity, it should be noted that certain regions may be underrepresented in this analysis. Furthermore, the restricted age range in the studies may hinder the generalizability of the findings to all age groups. These limitations necessitate future research to be designed with more comprehensive data sources and larger sample populations.

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As the author of this research, I declare that I have no conflicts of interest.

Statement of Publication Ethics

Esra TEKE

Çocukluk dönemi duygusal istismarının yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkileri: Bir sistematik literatür taraması

All the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed in the entire process from the planning, implementation, data collection to the analysis of the data. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Actions" have been carried out.

During the writing process of this study, scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed; no falsification was made on the collected data, and this study was not sent to any other academic media for evaluation.

Research ethics committee approval information

Since this study is a systematic literature review, it does not fall under the category of studies requiring Ethical Committee Approval. Therefore, Ethical Committee Approval has not been declared.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZ

Giriş

Çocukluk dönemi istismarı dünya genelinde milyonlarca çocuğun her yıl çeşitli şekillerde mağdur olduğu, geniş çapta tanınan ciddi bir halk sağlığı sorunudur (Gilbert vd., 2009; Gilbert vd., 2012; Kessler vd., 2010; Taillieu vd., 2016). Bu sorunun farklı boyutları üzerinde yapılan araştırmalar genellikle fiziksel ve cinsel istismarın etkilerine odaklanmışlardır (Ackner vd., 2013; Adams vd., 2018; Bifulco vd., 2002; Christ vd., 2019; Egeland, 2009). Nitekim, Moody ve arkadaşlarının (2018) 337 çalışmayı içeren sistematik derlemesinde, cinsel istismar 287 çalışmada, fiziksel istismar 200 çalışmada incelenmişken; duygusal istismara yalnızca 105 çalışmada yer verilmiştir. Benzer şekilde, Norman ve arkadaşlarının (2012) derlemesinde de duygusal istismara dair daha az sayıda çalışmanın olduğu belirtilmiştir. Xiao ve diğerlerine (2023a) göre, duygusal istismara daha az dikkat edilmesinin sebeplerinden biri, bu türün soyut yapısı ve tanımlanmasının diğer türler kadar açık olmamasıdır. Ayrıca, duygusal istismar çoğu zaman diğer fiziksel ve cinsel istismar türleriyle birlikte görülür, bu da bu türün bağımsız olarak incelenmesini daha zor hale getirebilir. Oysa çocukluk dönemi duygusal istismarı (ÇDDİ), çocukluk dönemi kötü muamelesinin en yaygın ve psikolojik olarak zararlı şeklidir (Moulding, 2017; Wang vd., 2023).

ÇDDİ, literatürde çocukluk dönemi psikolojik istismarı şeklinde de ifade edilebilmekte (Duman, 2019; Kwan & Kwok, 2021; Xiao vd., 2023b) ve yetişkinler tarafından yapılan ve çocuğun kişilik gelişimini olumsuz etkileyip psikososyal ilerlemesini engelleyen davranışlar olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Arslan, 2016). ÇDDİ, sözlü veya sözsüz, niyetli veya niyetsiz, aktif veya pasif olmak üzere farklı şekillerde gerçekleştirilebilir (Xiao vd., 2023a).

Çalışmalar, ÇDDİ'nin, yetişkinlerde depresyon, anksiyete bozuklukları, travma sonrası stres bozukluğu (TSSB), kişilik bozuklukları ve diğer psikolojik rahatsızlıkların gelişmesine zemin hazırlayabildiğini ortaya koymuşlardır (Amianto vd., 2018; Arslan, 2016; Christ vd., 2019; de Mattos Souza vd., 2016; Duprey vd., 2021; Gardner vd., 2019; Olgiati & Serretti, 2022; Schlenso-Schuster vd., 2024; Wang vd., 2023; Watts vd., 2021; Xiao vd., 2024). Ayrıca çalışmalar, duygusal istismarın, psikolojik sağlık üzerindeki etkilerinin yalnızca ruhsal bozukluklarla sınırlı kalmadığını, aynı zamanda geçmişte psikolojik istismara uğramış bireylerin, psikolojik engeller, güven sorunları ve ilişkisel travmalar nedeniyle daha zorlayıcı bir yaşam süreci geçirebildiğini ortaya koymuşlardır (Fuchshuber vd., 2018; Mertens vd., 2021). Bu kapsamda literatürdeki çalışmalar, duygusal istismarın, bireylerin genel yaşam kalitesini, sosyal ilişkilerini ve işlevselliklerini olumsuz yönde etkileyebileceğine işaret etmişlerdir (Domke vd., 2023; Spertus vd., 2003).

Araştırmalar ÇDDİ'nin uzun vadeli etkilerine ilişkin sonuçlar ortaya koysalar da bu konudaki literatür hala sınırlıdır (Aviles vd., 2022; Moulding, 2017). Yaygınlığı ve yıkıcılığı en fazla olan bu istismar türünün çok boyutlu doğasının ve bireylerin ruh sağlığı üzerinde oluşturduğu kalıcı etkilerin anlaşılabilmesi için daha derinlemesine ve kapsamlı çalışmaların yapılmasına ihtiyaç vardır (Jung & Soo, 2023; Watts vd., 2021). Bu kapsamda ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkilerine ilişkin mevcut literatürün bir araya getirildiği ve sistematik bir şekilde incelendiği bu çalışmanın, literatüre hem teorik hem de pratik açıdan önemli katkılar sunacağı düşünülmektedir.

Yöntem

ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkilerine ilişkin mevcut literatürün ortaya konduğu bu çalışmada, 2015-2024 yılları arasında yapılan ilgili çalışmalar, belirli kriterlere göre incelenmiştir. PubMed, Wiley Online Library, Sage Journals ve TR Dizin veri tabanlarında ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkileri konusunda yayımlanmış 15 araştırma makalesi çalışmanın araştırma grubunu oluşturmuştur.

Bulgular

Araştırmalar incelendiğinde, ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkilerine ilişkin en çok çalışmanın 2024, 2023 ve 2021 yıllarında yapıldığı görülmüştür. Ayrıca araştırmaların bulguları, ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkilerine ilişkin en fazla çalışmanın Çin'de yapıldığını ortaya koymuştur. ÇDDİ ile yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı arasındaki ilişkiler açısından araştırmaların çeşitli amaçlara odaklandığı fark edilmiştir. Çalışmaların örneklem büyüklüklerinin, 72 kişiden 34653 kişiye kadar değiştiği gözlenmiştir. Bulgular, ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkilerinin, örneklem gruplarının büyüklüğü ve klinik olup olmaması açısından önemli farklılıklar gösterebildiğini ortaya koymuştur. Çalışmalarda en yaygın kullanılan ölçme araçlarının, Çocukluk Çağı Travma Anketi ve Çocukluk Çağı Travma Anketi-Kısa Formu olduğu görülmüştür. ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkilerinin incelendiği çalışmalarda en sık odaklanılan değişkenin depresyon olduğu; bunun yanı sıra anksiyete, travma sonrası stres bozukluğu (TSSB), intihar düşünceleri, psikotik belirtiler, duygu düzenleme güçlükleri, dissosiyasyon, ruminasyon, bilişsel bozulmalar ve sosyal işlevsellik gibi çok sayıda psikolojik belirti ve süreç üzerine de önemli bulgular elde edildiği görülmüştür. Araştırmalar, ÇDDİ'nin, yetişkinlik dönemindeki ruh sağlığı üzerinde geniş çaplı ve derin etkiler oluşturduğunu ortaya koymuşlardır. Ayrıca çalışmalar, ÇDDİ'nin, bireylerin ruh sağlığını uzun vadeli ve kalıcı bir şekilde etkileyen önemli bir risk faktörü olduğuna ve duygusal istismarın, daha sağlıklı bir psikolojik duruma sahip bireylerle karşılaştırıldığında, psikolojik bozuklukların şiddetini artırıcı kritik bir etken olduğuna işaret etmişlerdir.

Tartışma ve Sonuç

ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkileri, son yıllarda artan bir ilgiyle araştırılmaktadır (Wang vd., 2023; Xiao vd., 2024; Zhang vd., 2024). ÇDDİ, istismar türleri arasında en az araştırılan ancak en yaygın ve zararlı olanıdır (Moulding, 2017). Çalışmalar, ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikte depresyon, anksiyete, TSSB gibi psikopatolojik semptomlarla güçlü bir ilişki gösterdiğini ve bireylerin ruh sağlığını uzun vadeli olarak etkileyebildiğini ortaya koymaktadır (Arslan, 2016; Gardner vd., 2019; Spertus vd., 2023; Van Landeghem & Jakobson, 2024). ÇDDİ, özellikle depresyon üzerinde derin etkiler oluşturmakta ve bireylerin duygu düzenleme becerilerini zayıflatarak ruhsal bozukluklara yol açabilmektedir (Teicher, 2002; Christ vd., 2019).

ÇDDİ'nin yetişkinlikteki ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkilerini inceleyen çalışmalar, özellikle Çin gibi ülkelerde yaygınken (Fang vd., 2015; Kwan & Kwok, 2021), Türkiye'deki araştırmaların sınırlı olduğu görülmektedir (Altıparmak vd., 2013; Kanak ve Pekdoğan, 2020; Yalçın, 2007). Bu durum, Türkiye'de çocukluk dönemi travmalarına yönelik akademik çalışmalara duyulan ihtiyacın arttığını göstermektedir. Gelecekteki araştırmalar, duygusal istismarın psikolojik etkilerini daha ayrıntılı bir şekilde inceleyerek, kültürel ve coğrafi farklılıkların bu tür travmatik deneyimlerin algılanışı ve ruh sağlığı üzerindeki etkilerini derinlemesine araştırmalıdır. Ayrıca, ÇDDİ ile ruh sağlığı arasındaki ilişkiyi daha iyi anlayabilmek için örneklem büyüklüğü, katılımcı çeşitliliği ve cinsiyet dağılımı gibi faktörlerin dikkate alınması büyük önem taşımaktadır.

ÇDDİ'nin uzun vadeli etkilerini anlamada kullanılan ölçme araçları, travmaların çok boyutlu bir şekilde incelenmesine olanak tanımaktadır (Xiao vd., 2023a). Ancak, duygusal istismarın karmaşık etkilerini daha iyi değerlendirebilmek için daha gelişmiş ve kapsamlı ölçme araçlarına ihtiyaç vardır (Grave vd., 2021). Araştırmalar, ÇDDİ'nin biyolojik, psikolojik ve çevresel faktörlerle nasıl etkileşime girdiğini derinlemesine incelemeli ve özellikle ÇDDİ'nin erkekler üzerindeki etkilerine dair daha fazla çalışma yapılmalıdır (Khosravani vd., 2019).

Araştırmalar, ÇDDİ'nin sadece bireyler üzerinde değil, aile ve toplum yapıları üzerinde de kalıcı etkiler oluşturduğu ve nesiller boyu sürebilecek etkilere sahip olabildiğini ortaya koymaktadır (Aviles vd., 2022). Bu bağlamda, erken müdahale stratejilerinin önemi fark edilmekte ve bireylerin yaşam kalitesinin artırılması için farkındalık çalışmalarının önemi dikkat çekmektedir. Zira, ÇDDİ'nin psikolojik sağlık üzerindeki etkileri derin ve kalıcıdır. Gelecekte yapılacak

arařtırmalar, bu etkileri daha ayrıntılı ve çok yönlü bir şekilde incelemeli, toplumda erken müdahale ve farkındalık stratejilerinin geliştirilmesine odaklanmalıdır.