

The Importance of Psychological Resilience in Earthquake Survivors' Mental Health Depremzedelerin Ruh Sağlığında Psikolojik Sağlamlığın Önemi

Ayşegül YETKİN TEKİN ¹ 

¹Adıyaman University Faculty of Education, Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Adıyaman, TÜRKİYE

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the article titled "Investigation of Suicide Attempt, Impulsivity, Psychological Pain and Depression in Earthquake Survivors Affected by the February 6, 2023 Kahramanmaraş Centered Earthquake" published in the latest issue of your journal and written by Sehlukoğlu and her colleagues (1). Accordingly, Sehlukoğlu et al. reported that the levels of psychological pain in earthquake survivors who were affected by the February 6, 2023 Kahramanmaraş centered earthquake and attempted suicide after these earthquakes were related to depressive and anxious symptoms. I congratulate the authors for this research that draws attention to the important psychological problems of earthquake survivors.

I would like to contribute to the findings of the research article titled "Investigation of Suicide Attempt, Impulsivity, Psychological Pain and Depression in Earthquake Survivors Affected by the February 6, 2023 Kahramanmaraş Centered Earthquake" through the effects of psychological resilience on earthquake-related mental and psychosocial outcomes. "Psychological resilience" is defined as the totality of characteristics that enable adaptation to stressful life events, and is affected by factors such as an individual's character traits, coping strategies, the individual's social support network, and level of education. Individuals with high levels of psychological resilience have an easier time adapting to traumatic life events and are less likely to have trauma-related psychological disturbances (2).

The most common mental and psychological disturbances in earthquake survivors are acute stress reactions, acute stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, domestic violence, anger management problems, and burnout. These disturbances in earthquake survivors can be affected by many factors. The personality traits of earthquake survivors, psychosocial support, previous traumatic experiences, the time it takes to reach professional support, and the status of meeting needs such as shelter are among the most important factors affecting trauma-related consequences that can be seen in earthquake survivors (3).

Psychological resilience defined is also defined as an important factor that can affect trauma-related problems in earthquake survivors. The findings of the study I conducted on the academicians affected by the earthquakes on February 6, 2023 showed that a high level of psychological resilience was related to low post-traumatic stress and low burnout levels (4). Namely, as the psychological resilience of earthquake-affected academicians increased, post-traumatic stress and burnout levels decreased. The findings of other studies conducted on earthquake survivors on February 6, 2023 also showed that earthquake survivors with higher levels of psychological resilience had higher mental health levels and lower earthquake-related anxiety levels (5). Considering that psychological resilience is a concept that can be improved, psychological resilience can be assumed as a factor that can be intervened in to prevent mental problems that may arise in earthquake survivors.

In conclusion, the fact that our country is located in an earthquake geography reveals the possibility of encountering earthquake-related psychological consequences. Therefore, psychosocial intervention programs aimed at improving psychological resilience can be disseminated in earthquake survivors to prevent psychological problems such as suicide, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and burnout.

Corresponding Author / Sorumlu Yazar

Dr. Ayşegül YETKİN TEKİN

Adıyaman University Faculty of Education, Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Adıyaman, TÜRKİYE

E-mail: draysegulyetkin@gmail.com

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