



Distress tolerance and symptom severity mediate failure on a symptom validity test in Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans with PTSD

Purpose

To examine the relationship between PTSD and performance on PVTs and SVTs, to determine if the relationship between PTSD diagnosis and performance on SVT and PVTs would be mediated by distress tolerance and PTSD symptom severity.

Participants

Researchers tested sixty-three Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans.

How was the study conducted?

Dichotomous variables were created for PTSD diagnosis (using CAPS-5), Medical Symptom Validity Test (MSVT) failure, and b-Test failure. Continuous variables were created for the Structured Inventory of Malingered Symptomatology (SIMS), distress tolerance (DTS), and symptom distress (PCL-5). Hypothesis testing was conducted using serial mediation analysis, with distress tolerance and symptom distress as mediators, respectively.

Findings

Models predicting b Test and MSVT failure were not significant. The model predicting SIMS score was significant. Post hoc analyses of SIMS subscales indicated that the serial mediation model predicted the Neurologic Impairment, Amnesic Disorders, and Affective Disorders subscales, but not Psychosis or Low Intelligence.

Military Impact

Results suggest that difficulty tolerating negative affect may contribute to elevated PTSD symptom distress and result in over-reporting symptoms.

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