

The Relationship between Early Adverse Experiences and Attachment Styles with Premenstrual Syndrome Symptoms

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Abstract

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is a pattern of symptoms that occurs during the luteal phase and reduces or completely disappears at the onset of the follicular phase of the natural menstrual cycle, which belongs to woman physiology. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between the level of experiencing and witnessing violence in childhood and attachment styles shaped by interactions with caregivers and PMS symptom levels in adult women. In order to analyze, Premenstrual Syndrome Scale, Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, The Scale of Witnessing the Domestic Violence of Father Towards Mother In Childhood and Three Dimensional Attachment Style Scale were delivered to 271 women via online forms and the collected data were analyzed with SPSS software. According to the Pearson correlation analysis, both experiencing physical ($r = .120$ $p < .05$), emotional ($r = .281$ $p < .01$) or sexual violence ($r = .169$ $p < .01$) and emotional neglect ($r = .138$ $p < .05$) during childhood and witnessing violence within the family are associated with increased PMS symptoms in adulthood ($r = .129$ $p < .05$). The Pearson correlation for attachment styles shows that anxious attachment increases the symptoms of PMS ($r = .437$ $p < .01$), while secure attachment alleviates the symptoms ($r = -.185$ $p < .01$). In insecure attachment styles, avoidant attachment was not found to be a factor affecting premenstrual symptoms. In the ANOVA analysis applied to compare the change in symptom level according to attachment style, it was found that anxiously attached women were the group that experienced PMS symptoms most severely and had a significant difference with avoidant attachment unlike secure attachment.

Keywords: experiencing violence, witnessed to violence, secure attachment, insecure attachment, women health