

Center for the Victims of Torture

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

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Policy Issue Resources

Introduction: In this paper we report provisional field results on the impact of CVTs (the Center for Victims of Torture) interdisciplinary group treatment on physiotherapy indicators in refugees living in urban and camp settings in Kenya and Jordan. The physiotherapy component of this model includes pain neuroscience education, sleep hygiene, posture and body mechanics instruction and healing of pain and trauma from a biopsychosocial perspective, in a program of ten weekly sessions. This program is supported by a clinical assessment that records a broad set of indicators of participant experience and functioning. In addition, some survivors report having pelvic floor dysfunction and data will be offered about a subset of survivors looking at prevalence of these issues.

Methods: Survivors are identified through referral systems, community education and sensitization campaigns, contacts and trainings with other NGOs and health care providers. Prospective survivors are screened into CVT services or referred to other agencies that can better meet their needs. CVT focuses its services on refugees with physical and emotional difficulties that may be effectively treated through its interdisciplinary treatment model and who have survived torture or related human rights violations. Following an informed consent process, survivors participate in a comprehensive individual assessment and then progress to the 10-week program. Wherever possible, follow-up assessments are conducted 2 weeks after the sessions end, and at 3, and 9 months following completion of the 10-week long intervention.

Results: On average, participants who completed 3-month follow-up assessments showed statistically and clinically significant improvements on physiotherapy indicators.

Discussion: Provisional results are encouraging and suggest that the model is adaptable to the needs of different populations and settings. As nearly all participants receive both counseling and physiotherapy, it is difficult to know which benefits can be attributed to physiotherapy alone.

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Winnie graduated from Moi University -- College of Health Sciences with a BSc in physiotherapy. Prior coming to CVT in 2017 to work as a staff physiotherapist in the Kakuma program, she worked at Daniel Lomboni Health Center and Osoita Physiotherapy Wellness Center.

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