

# Importance of Psychological Support for Child Victims of Rape - Clinical Studies in a Post-Conflict Area in Goma

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**Abstract:** *Since the second half of the last century, a new form of large-scale criminality has developed around the world; most often justified by economic, social, political and accountancy interests. This is particularly sexual violence. The wars of 1996 and 1998 in the Democratic Republic of Congo and especially in its eastern part, Goma and its surroundings have only worsened the psycho-economic situation already deplorable and cause millions of victims whose most targeted are the children cruelly hit by crimes of all kinds. These victims have been reached in their dignity, in their physical and mental integrity. In the face of the post-traumatic stress presented by the children who were the victims of the violence in Goma, we could not stay idle, which is why we have expressed the wish to help them psychologically with their companions in order to reduce or even eliminate the existing psychological trauma.*

**Keywords:** Victim, rape, psychological support

## 1. Introduction

The quest for human survival has quickly been accompanied, in the past few decades, by very serious human rights violations. The history of the world, in general, counts a list of these horrible facts: the hostage-taking, the tortures, the genocides, the violence made to the less strong or vulnerable subjects, the violence of rules of conduct of a war...

The wars waged by the Democratic Republic of the Congo left behind damage in all sectors and mainly a significant number of delayed victims including physical, moral and psychological violence.

At the international level, the United Nations has been committed to promoting and protecting human rights through many international instruments since its establishment in 1945.

Among these rights, women's rights are high on the agenda. Although women's rights have received more attention from the United Nations in recent decades, violence against women has persisted in many countries.

Addressing this study on violence against women is "all acts of violence directed against the female sex, causing or potentially causing women physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including the threat of such acts, the compulsion or the arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in public life or in private life "

In the same context, it is not only women who are targeted, but also children who constitute the potential victims of abuse including forced recruitment into armed groups, sexual violence against children and who, moreover, appear as one of the most frequent and destructive modalities.

Such violence should be considered not simply in a humanitarian and compassionate approach because it is a social tragedy, an archaic pathology of civilizations that

must impose ethical consideration in the context of a voluntary policy determined to illuminate a situation Rigorous clinical knowledge.

In view of all these findings, in the current psychological clinical study, we proposed to conduct a study in the field of victimology oriented towards sexual violence against children. Reason why, this study focused on the importance of psychological support for child victims of rape. "Clinical studies in a post-conflict area in Goma" in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2015.

The main purpose of this article is to provide psychological counseling to help child victims of rape for their rehabilitation, to the extent possible, of their trauma-affected mental health.

By doing so, if it is to be raised at this level, the purpose of this scientific study is to produce a support, a document that could enable researchers in clinical psychology, managers of non-governmental organizations and other structures to assist in this field category of children, to efficiently carry out the process of psychological counseling for child victims of rape in general, and in particular children who are victims of such rapes, while obviously taking into account a biopsychosocial approach.

Louis Crocq (1995, p.34) estimated that "the violence and the horror of combat always leave, in addition to immediate psychic disorders, a significant number of psychic sequelae and among the survivors, the wounded and the mutilated are counted by Hundreds of thousands, but all survivors, wounded or physically unharmed, male or female, young or old bear in themselves another wound: the secret wound that is post-traumatic stress.

Speaking of trauma, Crocq (1995, p.34) refers to this act as "an act of violence, of humiliation in which the victim fears terribly for his life and feels a deep sense of helplessness that few other events can arouse.

Freud (1895) will also make an observation of the case and provide an illustration of the method used to describe the mechanisms related to sexual trauma in the choice of hysterical neurosis. Strauss (1979, p.41) will also recognize in his investigations that, as a general rule, women suffer the consequences of violence disproportionately in relation to men, whether in the case of psychological wounds or traumas psychological or economic consequences.

Whatever the scale of this pandemic in the world in general and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular, the census of the victims remains dark, especially since, in the light of Perrot's writings (1998, p. his work directed by Frederic Chauvaud and Gilles Malandain, women struggle to recognize as non-pathological or non-exceptional, the violence of which they are victims, but also the violence that is inflicted on them. The author adds that women, who pass to talk about their prejudice before the courts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are in a double bind: "impossible victims" and "impossible guilty". Sexual violence has thus remained a thousand-headed hydra and with a look at vulnerability, we realize that women and children are the greatest victims of sexual violence, hence the obligation of the State to provide protection to this category of the population.

Concerned with this situation, the Democratic Republic of Congo has, as part of efforts to eradicate this scourge, set up the National Strategy to fight against gender-based violence. The overall objective of the said National Strategy to Combat Violence is to contribute to the prevention and reduction of sexual and gender-based violence and to improve the holistic care of victims and survivors, including the re-education of the perpetrators of this sexual violence.

Article 15 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2006, p.9) stipulates that "the public authorities shall ensure the elimination of sexual violence", "Without prejudice to international treaties and agreements, any sexual violence every person, with the intention of destabilizing, dislocating a family and extirpating a whole people is set up as a crime against humanity, punishable by law".

However, it must be said that the Congolese legal arsenal has been strongly influenced by international legal instruments. Interest in the issue of victims of sexual violence goes far beyond the scope of research and even more so to research in psychology.

The peculiarity of this study is the fact that, not only does it address the traumatic notion of sexual violence but also and especially that it proposes a model of psychological support for the relief of discomfort.

Indeed, according to Vital Mangoni (2006, p.234), the psychological support that we are talking about here is a means of help or a charge for anyone suffering from psychological difficulties in order to treat psychic or somatic disorders of the mind.

Supportive psychotherapies are the most common, the most practiced, but the least theoretically developed. They can be used alone, thus constituting the essential treatment or the

only practicable. They can also be used as prerequisites for a very deep psychotherapy in a subject too fragile or initially unmotivated.

Its goal is to quickly restore the psychological balance of the patient and obtain the greatest possible symptomatic improvement. They do not seek to transform the personality of the patient but to strengthen his defenses and to improve his adaptation to the external environment.

Regarding a victim, living creature offered as a sacrifice to the deity or a person who sacrifices himself for a cause, an interest or a passion of others. Who has been killed or injured in an accident, a crime, an epidemic, or even a disaster (Wikwinder available under CC BY-SA 3.0 license).

As for rape, it is the violence that is done to a person without his consent or by force, consisting of vaginal, anal or oral sex penetration or penetration by the hand or an object (Wiktionary available under CC BY -SA 3.0 license).

As a result, the Congolese law (2006) on sexual violence in its article 167 as amended makes rape an offense by considering it as any act contrary to morals, carried out intentionally and directly on a person without the valid consent of that person. it constitutes an attack. The law stigmatizes the rape, assimilating it to an indecent assault committed without violence, cunning, or threat to the person or with the help of the person of a child under the age of 18 will be punished by a penal servitude of 6 months to five years.

How important would psychological support be for girls who are victims of sexual violence in post-conflict areas? This is the major concern of this study, the next paragraph of which illuminates the provisional answer.

Indeed, the psychological support would help restore the mental health of one of the girl's victims of sexual violence in the post-conflict zones, particularly in Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Study Population

A girl, who has lost hope for life, was observed at the Kyeshero hospital in the Pavilion of Sexual Violence Victims (PVSS) more precisely in Goma in North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Kyeshero Hospital is located in the Kyeshero district west of Goma City, Goma Commune, in the Democratic Republic of Congo's North Kivu Province, and is bounded on the east by the Philadelphia Church. West and North by the Faculty of Law and Economics of the Free University of the Great Lakes Countries and to the South by the Kyeshero Institute and Kyeshero Elementary School.

Note, however, that the hospital was built in the concession housing the provincial delegation of the Eighth Pentecostal Community in Central Africa, the Kyeshero primary and secondary schools, the Ibra radio studio, and the

Philadelphia church in front of the Faculty of Theology of the university of the countries free of big lake.

The Kyeshero Hospital has no other purpose than that of the works of the Eighth Pentecostal Community in Central Africa: Evangelism by Acts. Thus this hospital is given as a task, to help the whole man, body and spirit.

This psychologically supported clinical case was selected as the study population of rape survivors who received treatment at Kyeshero Hospital in Goma.

## 2.2 Practical case of psychological support

Patient transferred by the gynecology and obstetrics department of Kyeshero hospital in Goma for the purpose of being consulted by the patient and providing psychological help to reduce the trauma of rape and his psychological suffering.

## 2.3 Overview of the patient and management process

It is:

- JDT of her name, a girl of 16 years old, from a family of five children of which she is the eldest daughter, 4th Scientific Year, her parents still alive with Christian doctrine as a Brahmanist, resident of Goma in the district Himbi in the Democratic Republic of Congo, raped and deflowered on the field road by two men not otherwise identified. After two months, not seeing her periods, she decides to tell her mom the facts, which in turn explains to her husband, which does not cash and puts his daughter on the street. The psycho-social mothers commonly called in this part of the country, Mama Mushauri, brought her to the Kyeshero Hospital for a health care during the month of November 2014 and whose taking charge went until the month of January 2015.
- Reason for the transfer: psychological support; For this treatment of the victim JDT, we used the clinical method materialized by the technique of the drawn tree. A beautiful tree and we cut the branches gradually and the tree remained only with the trunk and some branches. The psychological interview began in the following way after the observation of this tree by the victim:
- Psychologist: did you see what I do?
- JDT: she answered, I saw of course,
- Psychologist: the tree, which was very beautiful with many leaves and was very good fruit, is not that what you saw?
- JDT: yes I have seen a nice big tree that can even serve as shade to people but suddenly a gentleman came and began to fall branches;
- Psychologist: he did that to satisfy himself or even satisfy his personal needs, listen to me now well that's okay?
- JDT: ok I follow you;
- Psychologist: tell me, this tree can still have a hope to resume its branches?
- JDT: in any case I do not really know;
- Psychologist: you know JDT, look at this tree is still buried in the ground do you see?
- JDT: Yes of course, so I see the tree still has its roots;

- Psychologist: So, this tree may have hope to resume its leaves, is not it?
- JDT: yes, the tree can of course have the hope of having its branches and even giving good fruits and lots of leaves;
- Psychologist: ok thank you very much for your remarkable participation in this session, can we continue?
- JDT: Yes, I want to hear more;
- Psychologist: Suppose this tree was you to whom unidentified people raped and you lost your virginity, they cut off the branches but as by the divine grace they left you alive, so they did not ' have not uprooted, cannot you hope that after the birth you will resume the course of your life normally?
- JDT: yes, precisely, I think of course;
- Psychologist: you think you can resume normally, what?
- JDT: I think I can resume my studies well and I can continue to believe or dream that I will be a doctor at HOPE IN AFRICA (an international NGO that helps victims of sexual violence in Goma);
- Psychologist: and your child what do you think of him?
- JDT: I do not even think about him since I do not even know his father;
- Psychologist: we advised JDT to consider God as the father of his son and give, if it wants to his son, the name of Emmanuel because it should be born in December 2014.

We note that this psychological support took place in Swahili and that after this session, the day after; we saw in JDT a change and especially a recovery of self-esteem a fruitful relationship with other victim's internet rape in the center.

## 3. Search Results

The result reveals the following:

- Breakdown of relations between JDT and his parents,
- Post traumatic stress due to sexual violence,
- Lowering self-esteem at JDT
- Diagnosis: post-traumatic stress due to rape;
- Predisposing factor: pregnancy post sexual violence and absence of the author or (the alleged father of pregnancy).
- Factors triggering the suffering: the victim does not know the father of the child, she is in conflict with her parents who believe that she organized herself to conceive, lack of means for her survival and that of her child in gestation.
- aggravating factors: she continues to learn that other girls continue to be victims of rape by persons not otherwise identified but unpunished by law 171 of the Penal Code and are brought to the same center where she is.
- Maintenance factor: The care in a hospital where she receives medical care and food while waiting for delivery.
- Conduct to keep: psychological support to restore psychic balance and systemic psychotherapy to make parents understand the need to restore confidence in their daughter while convincing them with the medical document that there was certainly rape on their girl who consequently gave an unwanted pregnancy.

#### 4. Discussion of Results

Regarding the relational recovery between JDT and her parents, the psychological support she provided through Kyeshero Hospital has helped to restore this relationship and raise the self-esteem of this girl victim of sexual violence at home. Goma, although she had delivered by caesarean section, a pretty baby of 4 Kilos and she gave him the name of Emmanuel as we proposed it to him because, was born in the month of February, and FARAJA in Swahili which means consolation in French.

This demonstrates the importance of care or psychological support as supported by Vital Mangoni (2006, p.234) who states that psychological support is a means of support anyone suffering from psychological difficulties to treat mental or somatic disorders of the mind.

In these traumatic investigations, Astrid Hirschelmann quoted by Jean and Katz (2006) alludes to the anxiety-provoking reviviscences to the syndrome of repetition and alteration of the victims' personality after they have suffered some kind of trauma, the author demonstrates. Importance of psychological support for the search for psychic balance and the normalization of their experience.

In the same way as this study revealed the restoration of psychic balance of JDT to the point of leading to relational recovery during a moment that would be fatal for his life in case this psychological help would be lacking.

This study has thus achieved the psychological mission while affirming that the victims of the sexual violence do not deserve to be left to their sad fate as if they wanted it or preferred. They deserve psychological supervision, psycho-social care and socio-professional or socio-economic reintegration.

Sexual violence is frequent and very serious in the context of wars. 120,000 rapes in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo per year, 16% of children have been raped or attempted rape in their lives (59% under 18), 5% of men have been raped or rape attempts in their lives (67% before 18 years), 3% of Gomatradians report having been victims of incest.

According to studies and countries, sexual violence affects between 20 to 30% of people during their lifetime, most often committed by relatives (in more than 80% of cases) statistics according to WHO (2010), they are present in all circles, mostly in conflict between two nations.

In circumstances such as those experienced by victims of sexual violence, there is no need to show the importance of psychological support that facilitates rehabilitation and socio-professional reintegration as was supported by Lopez and Cedile (2014). ) who claim that victims of sexual violence expect mental health professionals only for rehabilitation. For the psychological clinic, emphasis is given to group approaches, particularly mediation groups, which, moreover, have a great benefit for the subjects, and Lopez et al. (2014).

In sum, psychological support is invaluable for restoring the psychic balance of victims of sexual violence as it is experienced in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

#### 5. Conclusion

Here we are at the end of our study which focused on the importance of psychological support for victims of sexual violence in Goma, DR Congo. The research question summed up as follows: How important would psychological support be for girls who are victims of sexual violence in post-conflict areas? This is the major concern of this study, the next paragraph of which illuminates the provisional answer.

Indeed, the psychological support would help restore the mental health of one of the girls victims of sexual violence in the post-conflict zones, particularly in Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In carrying out this study, we have pursued a primary objective: that of providing psychological support in order to help child victims of rape in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to recover their state of mental health. And as a goal to produce a support that will allow researchers in clinical psychology Non-Governmental Organization and caregivers to properly care for victims of rape.

In doing so, the scientific interest lay in the contribution of the techniques and processes of supportive psychotherapy. At the end of our research, based on the results obtained, we say that our objectives have been achieved.

Our research was conducted at Kyeshero Hospital in GOMA. This delineation was motivated by the ease we had during our post-graduate training at the same Hospital at GOMA.

Given the quality of our work and also the object of clinical psychology that of the study and the total understanding of the subject in its singularity; we worked with a case. Because each suffering subject is "unique" and presents his own problems, which differ from those of other subjects.

These results support our hypothesis that psychological support actually promotes the recovery of the mental health of child victims of rape. At the end of our psychological support we noticed a decrease or even a visible disappearance of post-traumatic stress, of the suicidal envy or of traumatism which could bring the victim died to the fetus.

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