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Introduction

- Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is often conceptualized as a trauma-related psychopathology. Approximately 30-50% of individuals with BPD meet criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)¹ and individuals with BPD often report having experienced adverse childhood events¹⁻⁴
- Recent evidence suggests that exposure to specific trauma types may be differentially associated with experience of BPD^{5,6}
- The present study sought to address this gap by examining the relationship between exposure to specific trauma types and BPD experience broken down into 5 dysregulation clusters: Emotional, behavioral, cognitive, interpersonal, and self

Hypotheses:

- Individuals who were exposed to interpersonal trauma compared to non-interpersonal trauma would indicate higher endorsement of dysregulation clusters
- Individuals who were exposed to sexual trauma compared to non-sexual trauma would indicate higher endorsement of dysregulation clusters
- Individuals exposed to childhood sexual trauma compared to adult sexual trauma would indicate higher endorsement of dysregulation across clusters

Methods

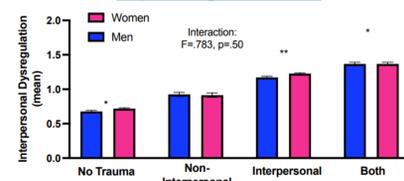
Participants: N= 36,309 adults age 18+ from the National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions–III (NESARC-III), a psychiatric epidemiological survey of noninstitutionalized US adults aged 18 or older conducted from April 2012 to June 2013.

	Full Sample	BPD-Only
Age (yrs.)	45.63 (17.50)	46.95 (17.6)
Sex (F)	20,447 (44%)	2,394 (56%)

Analysis: Multivariate Analyses of Variance with the 5 Dysregulation clusters entered as dependent variables, and trauma type (no trauma, non-interpersonal, interpersonal, both) and sex entered as fixed factors. Main effects of trauma type and sex, and trauma type*sex interaction were modeled. Analyses were repeated in full sample and BPD only, and controlling for PTSD

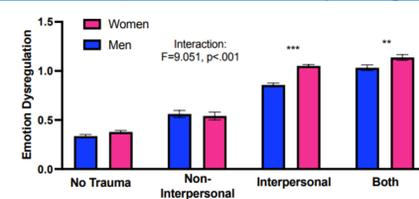
Results

1a. Full sample Interpersonal Dysregulation



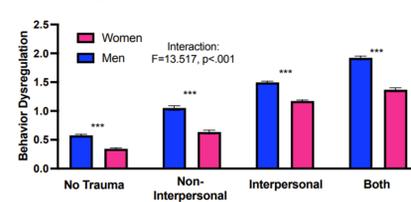
We observed a significant interaction between trauma exposure and sex on severity of interpersonal dysregulation; women reported elevated dysregulation for no trauma ($p<.05$), interpersonal ($p<.001$) and both ($p<.05$) relative to men

2a. Full sample Emotion Dysregulation



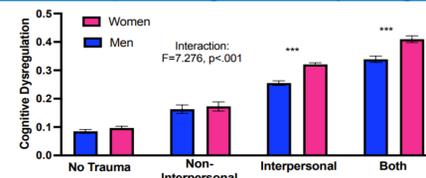
We observed a significant interaction between trauma exposure and sex on severity of emotion dysregulation; women reported a history of interpersonal and trauma both reported significantly higher scores than men with similar history.

3a. Full sample Behavior Dysregulation



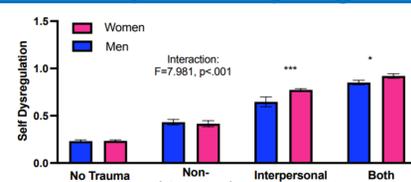
We observed a significant interaction between trauma exposure and sex differences on severity of behavior dysregulation; men reported elevated dysregulation in all groups relative to women ($p<.001$); sex differences most robust in interpersonal trauma/both.

4a. Full sample Cognitive Dysregulation



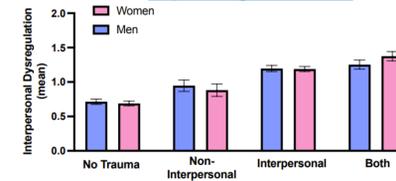
We observed a significant interaction between trauma exposure and sex on severity of cognitive dysregulation; women reporting a history of interpersonal and trauma both reported significantly higher scores ($p<.001$).

5a. Full sample Self Dysregulation



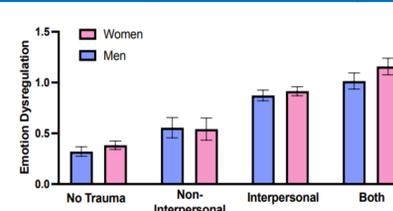
We observed a significant interaction between trauma exposure and sex on severity of self dysregulation; women reporting a history of interpersonal and trauma both reported significantly higher scores relative to men with similar history ($p<.001$).

1b. BPD sample Interpersonal Dysregulation



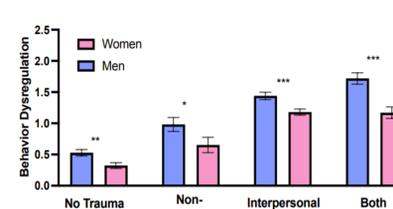
We did not observe an interaction between trauma exposure and sex on severity of cognitive dysregulation in BPD only.

2b. BPD sample Emotion Dysregulation



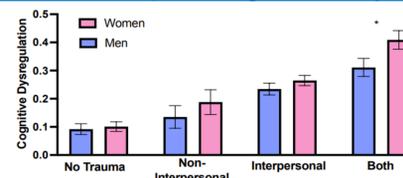
We did not observe an interaction between trauma exposure and sex on severity of cognitive dysregulation in BPD only.

3b. BPD sample Behavior Dysregulation



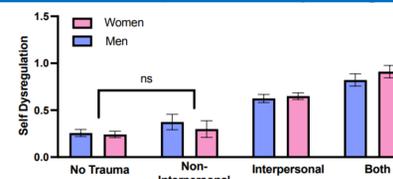
We did not observe an interaction between trauma exposure and sex on severity of behavioral dysregulation in BPD only. However, across groups men with BPD had significantly higher scores.

4b. BPD sample Cognitive Dysregulation



We did not observe an interaction between trauma exposure and sex on severity of cognitive dysregulation in BPD only.

5b. BPD sample Self Dysregulation



We did not observe an interaction between trauma exposure and sex on severity of self dysregulation in the BPD only sample. The difference between those with no trauma and non-interpersonal was non-significant on self-dysregulation. All other mean differences between trauma types were significant across clusters for both BPD only and full sample

Results & Conclusions

- Similar patterns of findings were observed for sexual vs. non-sexual trauma and childhood sexual vs. adult sexual trauma.
- Results suggest exposure to trauma is associated with more severe dysregulation symptoms across clusters excepting self dysregulation
- Similar findings in BPD and full sample
- Individuals exposed to interpersonal trauma specifically, with or without a BPD diagnosis, endorsed more severe dysregulation symptoms across clusters
- Potentially clinically meaningful sex differences in severity of dysregulation symptoms by specific trauma exposure type
- Only in full sample, not BPD only
- The BPD-only sample also did not report significantly more severe dysregulation symptoms compared to the full sample, suggesting that severity of dysregulation may look similarly for individuals exposed to trauma with or without a BPD diagnosis.
- Implications for utility of dimensional conceptualization of PD?

References

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