

# WE460: Chronic pain in adult Ukrainian refugees with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

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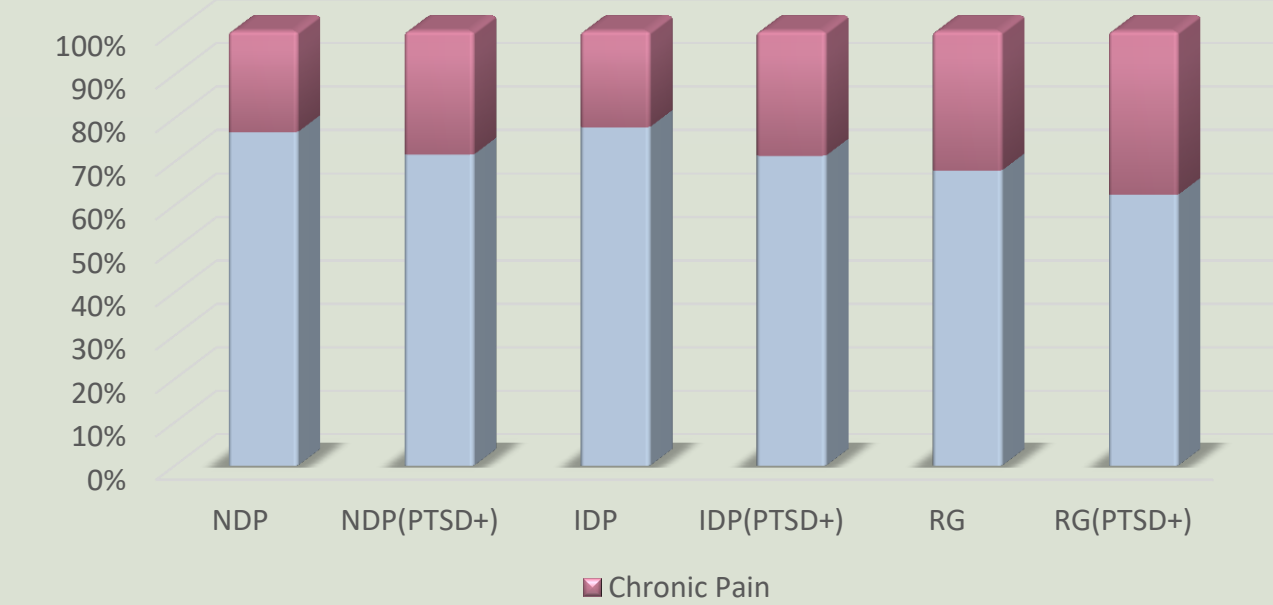
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## INTRODUCTION

Chronic pain in patients with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a frequent symptom and a complicating factor in the treatment of patients. Ukrainians faced numerous traumatic factors caused by war exposure and witnessing, from the danger of death and physical injury to various symptoms of mental trauma. Many studies investigating the management of chronic pain often exclude the participation of people from refugee and immigrant backgrounds.

## OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to examine the associations between chronic pain and mental distress among adult Ukrainians after the invasion at baseline and 6-month follow-up and assess whether associations changed significantly with time.

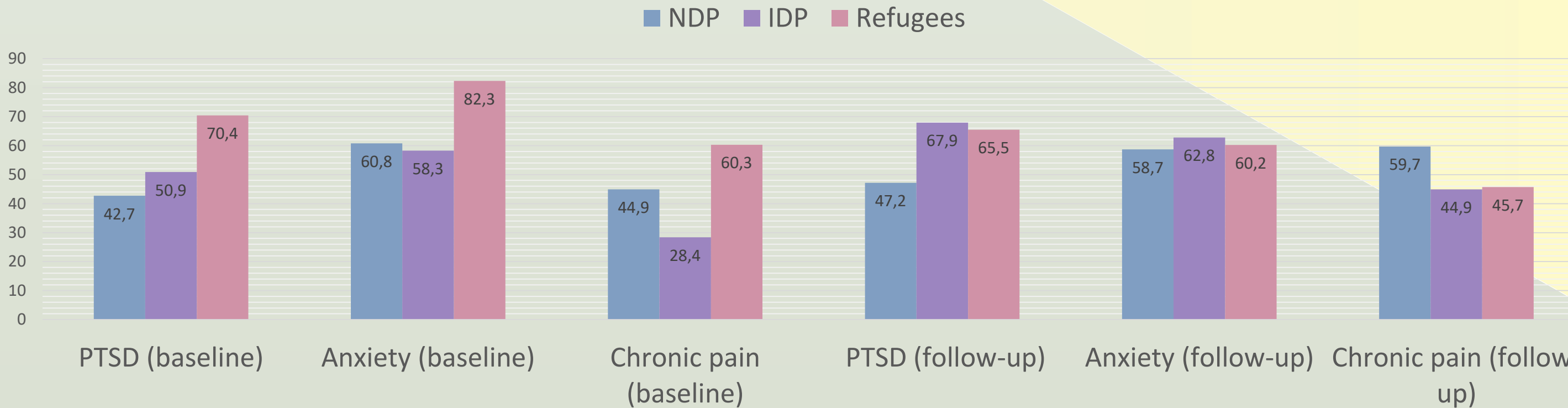


Prevalence of Chronic Pain in studied groups (baseline)

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The assessment was conducted on three different groups of participants: not displaced persons (NDP) from the Zaporizhzhia region (active hostile zone), internally displaced persons (IDP), and Ukrainian refugees in Poland, Warsaw (RG). The study included gathering sociodemographic data (age, sex, education, location) and validated self-report questionnaires for assessment of physical health conditions, including chronic pain conditions (CPC) and pain indicators, anxiety, and PTSD levels. Accordingly, 147 adults 43-74 years old were included in this study: 48 participants in the NDP group, 45 subjects in the IDP group, and 54 refugees from Ukraine who are now in Warsaw. Females were the largest numbers in all three groups (82%). Participants denied previously diagnosed mental health issues. A repeat survey was conducted after 6 months. We managed to contact 103 participants Data analysis was performed in SPSS 24.0 (IBM, Armonk, NY, USA).

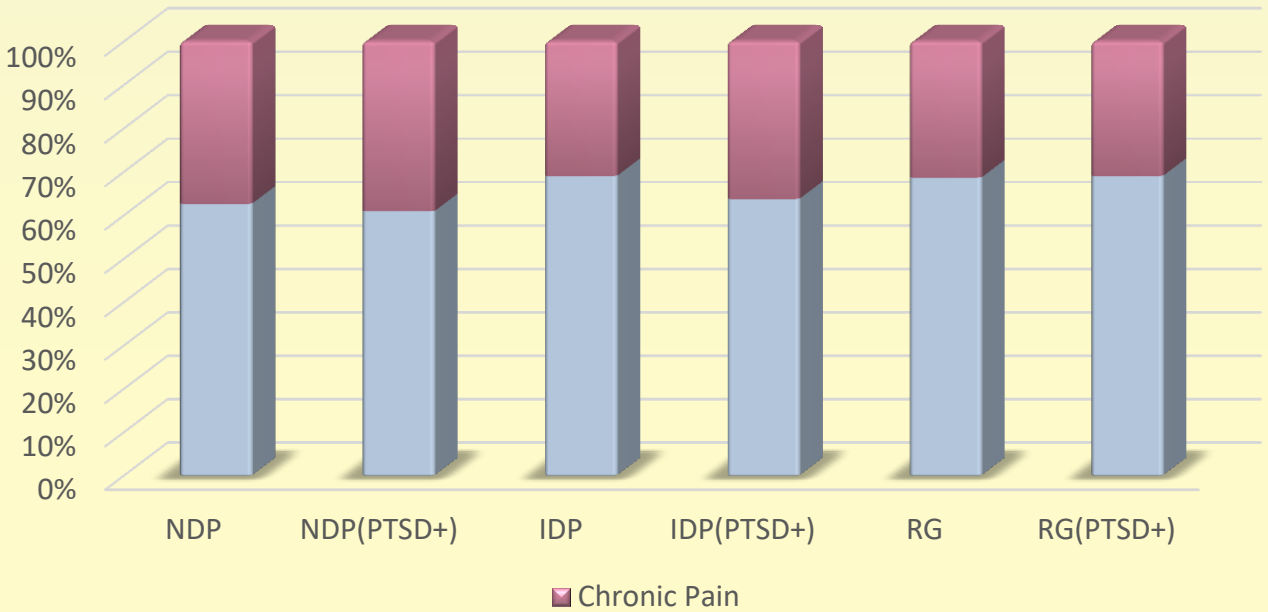
## RESULTS



We found that 64,3 % of participants reached the criteria for PTSD. Group comparison showed that the largest number of individuals who reached the criteria for PTSD was in the group of refugees (70,4 %) and the smallest number was in group NDP (42,7 %). Correlation for the full PTSD-positive sample between PTSD –like symptoms and pain indicator (The visual analog scale) were moderate and positive ( $R=0,46-0,62$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Chronic pain was associated with old age, lower education, sedentarism in the refugee's group, and sleep disorders (often night alarms), obesity, and old age in the NDP group.

## RESULTS

There was registered significant increasing the number of participants who reached the criteria for PTSD in 6 months in the IDP group, an insignificant increase in the NDP group, and an insignificant decrease in the refugee group. It should be noted that 72 % of refugees group received psychological support and were involved in social and integration activities during 6 months follow-up.



Prevalence of Chronic Pin in studied groups (follow-up)

## CONCLUSIONS

Participants with comorbid PTSD often reported the presence of chronic pain, increased levels of anxiety, and pain intensity. Refugees were the most vulnerable group in our study, but participants of all groups require further monitoring. Evidence-based interventions addressing both physical and emotional distress are important in improving outcomes.

## CONTACTS

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