

Posttraumatic growth among people infected with HIV: Longitudinal study from two temporal perspectives

A predominant amount of research indicates that experience of traumatic events leads to negative changes in the mental functioning of trauma victims, out of which posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is the most prevalent. Negative consequences of exposition to trauma are not only intuitively obvious but also very well described within the scientific literature. However, recently scientific attention has been shifted away from obvious negative consequences to **paradoxical positive outcomes of traumatic experiences**, which form the **phenomenon of posttraumatic growth (PTG)**.

In this study I want to investigate the PTG in case of the special case of trauma, i.e. struggling with potential life-threatening somatic illness as the example of **people infected with HIV**. In particular, I search for psychological as well as social factors, which may be responsible for promoting this positive phenomenon in the patient group. These variables include resilience as a personality trait, psychological resources, HIV/AIDS stigma and finally affective well-being.

The methodological novelty of this study is a combination of **classic longitudinal assessment** of the study variables with the aid of paper and pencil questionnaires with so-called **intensive longitudinal design, conducted via electronic daily diaries**. **Classic longitudinal assessment will include two questionnaire measurements in suitable time intervals**. **Electronic daily diary studies** will be conducted for a subsample of the participants who after filling in the paper-and-pencil questionnaires will agree to participate in the online part of the study. For five consecutive days, from Monday till Friday, each evening study subjects will fill online shortened version of questionnaires send via hyperlink to their email boxes. This method will allow us to assess the study variables day by day.

In summary, it is worth pointing out **the potential scientific, as well as social significance stemming from realization of this project**. First of all, based on the available literature, it can be stated that this is the first study on PTG measured in such specific way both in general PTG literature, and in particular among people with HIV. Secondly, knowing the answer to the question of why some patients break down in the face of HIV infection, while others “grow” under the influence of such a crisis, it will be possible to develop effective methods of psychological help, dedicated specifically to such patients. As far as I am concerned, all these conditions are important arguments for realizing my research project.