LIFETIME POLY-VICTIMIZATION AND INTERNALIZING PROBLEMS: THE MODERATING ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY AND OUT-OF-HOME-CARE?

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Victimization in the form of child maltreatment or neglect has been found to be a significant risk factor for the psychosocial and behavioral development of children and adolescents with persisting negative effects into adulthood. Poly-victimization which describes the accumulation of several forms of victimization has been found to be a particular severe risk factor for the development of internalizing problems like depression or anxiety. However, the interaction of risk and protective factors is important for understanding the development and resilience of young people under these difficult circumstances. Previous studies have hypothesized that the negative impact of poly-victimization on mental health can be explained through the reduction of resources (e.g. self-efficacy) that might otherwise have supported coping. Although severe victimization experiences are among the most common reasons for allocating children or adolescents to out-of-home-care (e.g. foster or adoptive families), youth in care have received little attention in research so far. Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine the moderating role of self-efficacy and the form of family placement for the association between lifetime poly-victimization and internalizing problems. The quantitative online study using German versions of the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (Finkelhor et al., 2011), the Child Behavior Checklist/Youth-Self-Report (Döpfner et al., 2014) as well as the Resource Questionnaire (Lohaus & Nussbeck, 2016) will be completed by the end of 2021 including foster and adoptive families ($n > 100$) as well as biological families ($n > 100$) with children aged between 8 und 21 years. Preliminary results of a moderated moderation analysis supported the association between lifetime poly-victimization and internalizing problems as well as the relevance of self-efficacy. For professional practice, strengthening youth in their self-efficacy can be an important mechanism to counter the negative impact of poly-victimization on internalizing problems and to support resilience in the face of adversities.