Psychopathological Protocols of the Korean Civil War Veterans

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After more than a half decade since the Korean Civil War has broken, Korean Civil War Veterans are still suffering from past trauma and pathological symptoms (e.g., depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder). Despite of the severity of these pains and distresses, the Korean Government compensate only for severe psychotic disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, delusional disorder). Recently, it is fortunate that the Government is willing to extend the compensation range to less severe symptoms including neurotic disorders. To identify neurotic disorders due to war participation, it is necessary to assess the psychopathological profile of Veterans. In addition, the test procedure should rule out effects of education level, age, and motivation to compensation. Therefore, a projective test like Rorschach test may be suitable for this purpose. To investigate the Korean Civil War Veterans’ psychological sequela, this study tried to identify the characteristics of the Rorschach response protocol.

METHOD

Subjects were twenty-one veterans who agreed to participate this study. For the control group, nineteen participants were recruited from nearby community, who were similar in age, sex, education levels with veterans.

Rorschach protocols were administrated, scored, analyzed according to the Exner’s comprehensive system (2006). Specifically, each Rorschach variable was divided into 7 clusters (e.g., core, mediation, affect, ideation, processing, interpersonal and self perception section) and several special indices (e.g., depression index, hyper-vigilance index, and coping deficit index).

Pure C (pure color response) reveals uncontrolled emotionality. S (space response) relates to oppositional attitude, internal anger and hostility. Isolation Index relates to withdrawal and distress of interpersonal relationships. DEPI and HVI are special indices that reveals depression and hyper-vigilance.

RESULTS

Table 1 displays means and standard deviations of veterans group and control group. Results of t-tests between the two groups showed that veterans were significantly differ in pure C, t(38)=2.35, p<.05, in S, t(38)=2.55, p<.05, in Isolation index, t(38)=2.65, p<.01, in DEPI, t(38)=2.28, p<.01, in HVI scores, t(38)=2.58, p<.001, and in Lambda scores. t(38)=2.07, p<.05.

DISCUSSION

In summary, results of t-tests between the veterans group and the control group showed that veterans were characterized as 1) elevated internal anger and hostility, 2) affect dysregulation, 3) depressive tendency, 4) hyper-vigilance, 5) feelings of alienation and distress in interpersonal relationships, and 6) cognitive inaccuracy. Taken together, these patterns suggest that Korean Civil War veterans still experience the past trauma and lasting pathological sequela. These results are consistent with the previous studies which showed Vietnam veterans’ PTSD symptoms and subjective distresses on Rorschach test (van der Kolk, & Ducaey, 1984).

REFERENCES