O R I G I N A L   P A P E R

Age and Gender as Determinants of Psychological Health for Roma People in Greece

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to study the psychological characteristics of Roma people in Greece focusing in the particular relation of age and gender with shame and psychopathology. The Others as Shamer scale, Experience of Shame Scale and Symptom Check List 90 were administered to collect the data along with a detailed questionnaire which recorded all social and economic factors that may affect the psychological characteristics studied. Participants were 361 Romani people (236 women and 125 men), living in the central Greece area. Data collection took place between January 2011 and December 2012 and interview was chosen as the appropriate way of data collection. We find that Romani women endorsed higher psychological distress than men at all the symptoms domains encountered: general psychopathology, anxiety, depression and shame. Further, they suffer from inadequate health care and housing conditions, poor quality of education, and lack of job opportunities. Young women Roma are more educated and they do not have high levels of psychological distress as older persons do. Interventions to improve the health status of Romani women should address gender and ethnic inequalities simultaneously, whereas educational programs should be addressed to older persons of Roma community as well.

Keywords*: Women, Shame, Roma, Psychology, Disparities*