

Men's experiences of abuse form a life course perspective

- a time geographic study in a psychiatric care context.

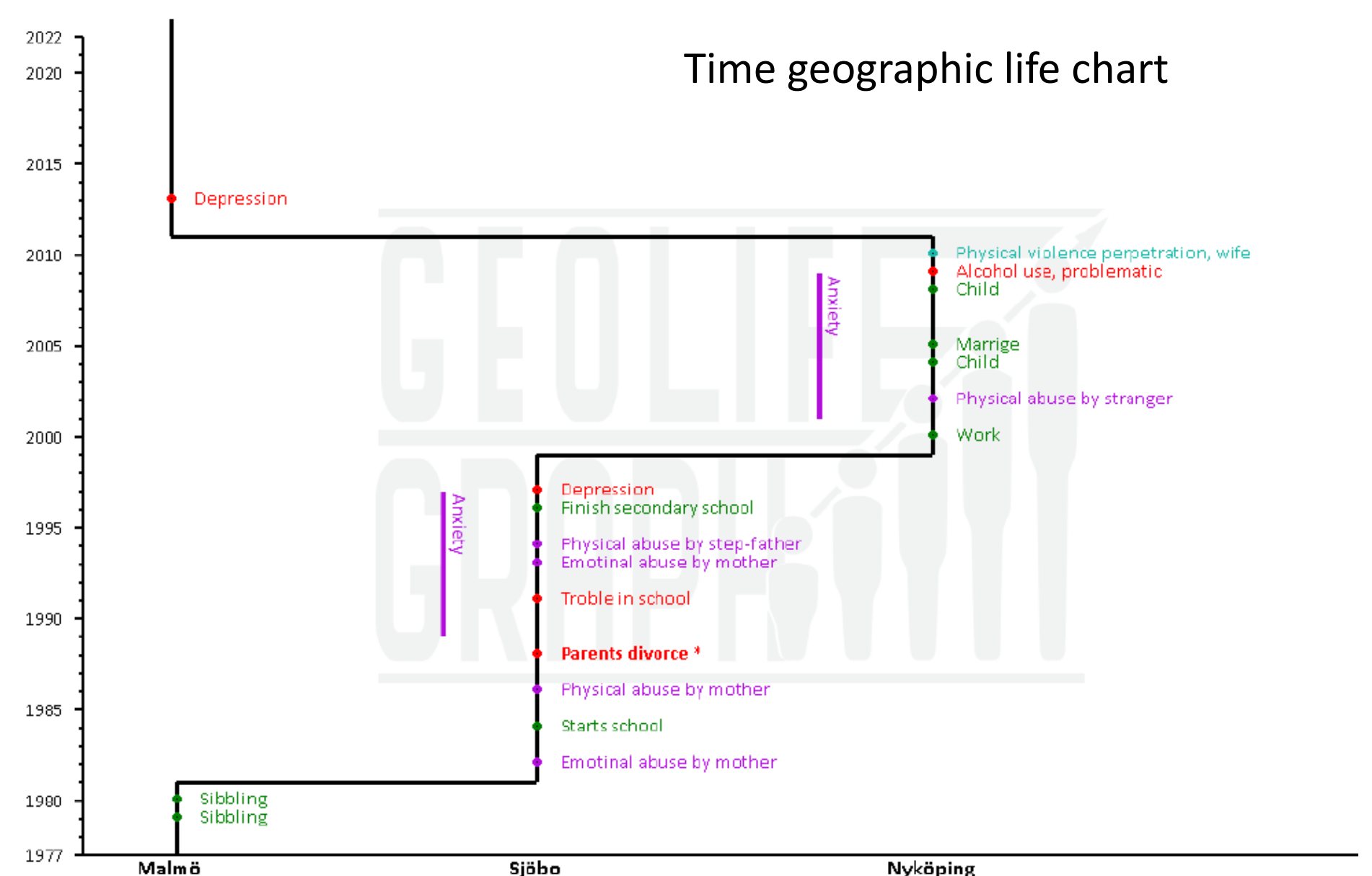
Swedish context

Background

Psychiatric and mental health nurses need to have good knowledge about men's experience of abuse during the life course since abuse is a common experience for men in most societies. This life course perspective of abused is important since several studies have showed that experience of abuse in childhood is a traumatic and stressful event and can give consequences for one's health later in life. Research has showed that experiences of adverse childhood experiences increased the risk depression, problematic alcohol and drug use, suicide attempt and death by suicide later in life.

The consequences of adverse childhood experiences are not limited to effecting one's own health. It is also known that adverse childhood experiences are associated with violence perpetration as adolescent as well as an adult.

Researchers within this research field present different possibilities to face this public health crisis that adverse childhood experiences represent worldwide. One suggestion to handle this crisis is to prevent violence perpetration by treating depression and alcohol use in young people. Another suggestion is to screen for childhood abuse and exposure to domestic violence as a part of any comprehensive medical evaluation, to offer effective treatment or referral.



Results

The analysis of life events resulted in four categories – *living the everyday life, adverse life experiences, the lived experience of abuse exposure and perpetration and systems of support*. The study reveals that the men faced severe domestic abuse, difficult home conditions and a lack of support during childhood. Further, they encountered stressful events and mental health issues in adulthood.

Conclusions

The results from the current study show that the time-geographic life chart provides a comprehensive picture of the life course of men in a psychiatric context who had abuse experiences as both victims and perpetrators. Furthermore, the results show that the men experienced severe domestic abuse, difficult home conditions and a lack of support during childhood. Stressful life events and several changes of residence impacted them throughout life, and their adult life was marked by mental ill health. The findings from this study provide a deeper understanding of what life can hold for men with abuse experiences.

THE INTERGENERATIONAL CYCLE OF VIOLENCE



Method

A time geographic life chart can be used to illustrate abused men's comprehensive life course. These narratives from the patients should include victimization and will help the nurse to understand what is important for the patient's recovery and to encourage the patient to take more active role in his own treatment.

The aim of the study was to explore the life course of male psychiatric patients who had experienced domestic abuse as victims and as perpetrators.

An interview study was performed with nine informants using a time-geographic method followed by a qualitative analysis approach. The time-geographic method is a face-to-face semi-computerised method (software programme GeoLifeGraph®), which means that the participant and the interviewer are placed together in front of a computer where the patient's life chart is constructed. The interviewer started with inquiries about the patient's household moves and reasons behind each move, following a chronological order. The information was typed in the software, thereby creating a chart with the year on the y-axis and the geographic locations on the x-axis. The first layer in the graph that was added contained significant social events, where each event was marked by dots in the chart.



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE
WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

Relevance

Time-geography as a model for life charting in psychiatry can help us to better understand the individual's life situation and the life chart can also be a tool for strengthen trust and the therapeutic relationship between patient and caregiver. Charting and understanding life events is an important part of mental health nursing and will help to understand the comprehensive situation lived by the patient. To understand the present, the past needs to be illuminated and the person's life course can then be helpful to tailor the care and prevent mental illness.

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