

ANALYSIS OF SUPREME COURT DECISIONS REGARDING POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER FROM A MENTAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVE

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BACKGROUND AND AIM: Forensic psychiatry has developed since the 1990s to examine the legal aspects of mental illnesses, especially their effects on legal proceedings. PTSD, a psychiatric disorder that arises after traumatic events, is a major focus. The disability rate and the causal relationship between trauma and legal issues in PTSD cases are frequently discussed in forensic psychiatry. This study aims to analyze Supreme Court decisions regarding PTSD- diagnosed cases from the second half of 2024 from a psychiatrist's perspective.

METHODS: On January 31, 2025, a detailed search was conducted on the Supreme Court's decision database (<https://karararama.yargitay.gov.tr/>) using the terms "post-traumatic stress disorder" and "trauma-related disorder," filtering for decisions from the last six months of 2024. The obtained cases were analyzed. As the data is publicly available, ethical approval was not required.

RESULTS: The study analyzed 19 cases, including 11 related to sexual abuse, 7 to incapacity, and 1 to intentional injury. In 10 cases, PTSD diagnoses were rejected due to insufficient

information, such as the lack of a psychiatric expert report, unclear links between the trauma and PTSD, no evidence of whether the condition would persist or could improve with treatment, and no specified disability rate. In 9 cases, the health report with a PTSD diagnosis was accepted as valid. Of these, 4 cases considered PTSD as evidence of the event and influenced the court's decision, while in 5 cases, the report had no impact. No common feature was found in the preparation of the accepted reports.

CONCLUSIONS: The study highlights the importance of a precise diagnosis and thorough documentation of trauma-related psychiatric disorders for the healthy progression of legal proceedings. Health reports should include details on the victim's mental state, the possibility of improvement with treatment, and a clear connection to the traumatic event, as these factors can help prevent potential future legal issues for psychiatrists.

Keywords: PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder, forensic psychiatry, supreme court decisions, post-traumatic stress disorder