

Abstract

Psychological trauma in the mining industry is inevitable as employees are often exposed to life-threatening traumatic events. The employees might be aware of the cognitive, physical, and emotional reactions to the life-threatening events, yet yield to suppressing them without seeking psychological treatment. The employees' awareness of their reactions would allow for early intervention and thereby alleviating the development of post-traumatic stress disorder or triggering other disorders that might affect individuals' normal functioning. The purpose of the study was to explore at a mining operation centre in Rustenburg, mine employees' understanding of psychological trauma and the importance of psychological intervention when traumatised. The sample was purposive in nature because it was made up of all employees at a mining organization in Rustenburg. The employees working on surface transporting raw materials extracted from underground. A cross-sectional survey was conducted to describe and explore the research topic. A self-administered questionnaire was used to gather data. Likert scale data were analyzed quantitatively. The theoretical framework underpinning the study was 'Mental Health Literacy'. Based on research findings related to the purpose of the study 83% of the participants agreed that it is difficult to seek treatment after experiencing a traumatic event. The possible reasons for this are that they have negative expectations of professional help, prefer to rely on self-coping methods, fear being stigmatized for having a mental disorder if seeking treatment, and personal perceptions of being strong and self-reliant. The recommendations are made to management of the mining operation centre regarding possible changes in trauma policy and procedures that would be in the best interests of employees who experience psychological trauma.

Keywords: Psychological trauma, workplace trauma, mining industry, survey