At the end of this year there is a surprising amount to report from the field of elderly people and psychotrauma.

In October, Ellen Gielkens and colleagues published their exploration on the potential of EMDR on improving cognition in older adults with PTSD. Their treatment outcomes suggested a possible improvement of cognitive functioning after EMDR, regardless of pretreatment PTSD severity, even in older age. They postulate that early detection and treatment of PTSD might possibly play a role in prevention of cognitive decline.

On October 13, Bertine Mitima-Verloop, who works at the Arq Knowledge Center for War and Violence, received her PhD at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, for her dissertation *Together in silence*, which deals with the functions and effects of commemoration. Bertine's goal is to better understand commemoration in relation to trauma and loss and thus clarify how commemoration - for older and younger generations - can contribute to dealing with war experiences and loss.

And finally, Patricia Dashorst, psychiatrist at Arq Centrum'45, obtained her PhD at Groningen University, the Netherlands, on November 9 for her dissertation *Unraveling intrusions*. Intrusions - involuntary, spontaneously occurring images or thoughts that often occur after shocking experiences - play a role in children of survivors of the Second World War (and other wars). It appears that this may involve reliving one's own experiences or intrusive thoughts or images that refer to traumatic war experiences of parents or loved ones of those involved. With this research, Patricia provides insight into intergenerational consequences of psychotrauma, which many older PTSD patients face. In addition, the research contributes to an explanatory model which assumes that the storage in memory of traumatic and non-traumatic experiences does not differ, but that the process of remembering and (re)constructing subsequently influences the occurrence of intrusions. These insights contribute to optimizing treatment.

To read more:


Would you like to give feedback, share local developments in the field of trauma treatment in later life or participate in the SIG Aging & Life Cycle? If so, you may contact the ESTSS secretariat (secretariat@estss.org) or Jeannette Lely, j.lely@centrum45.nl.