Abstract

Hong Kong residents have undergone a period of social unrest since the anti-extradition

bill movement began in June 2019. We examined the association between exposure to political

violence, loss of resources, length of social media use and mental health distress among Hong

Kong residents during the social movement. A sample of 524 residents (above 12 years old)

completed an online questionnaire in February, 2020. Respondents reported their anxiety,

depressive and PTSD symptoms, 37.4% and 33% of respondents reported probable depression

(PHQ-9 score ≥10) and probable anxiety (GAD-7 score ≥10) respectively. 15.5% of respondents

who had exposed to political violence reported suspected PTSD (PCL5-4 score ≥10). Multiple

regression analyses revealed that higher personal and health-related resource loss were

associated with higher anxiety, depression and PTSD symptoms; younger age was associated

with higher anxiety and depression symptoms; higher direct exposure to political violence and

heavier social media use in reading socio-political news were associated with higher depression

symptoms; higher social resource loss was associated with PTSD symptoms. Logistics regression

results showed that personal resource loss was associated with probable anxiety, depression and

PTSD; health related resource loss was associated with probable anxiety and depression; higher

participation level in anti-government protests and boycotts was associated with probable

anxiety; younger age was associated with probable depression; heavier social media use were

associated with probable PTSD. The current findings shed light on the planning of welfare and

mental health services in Hong Kong.

Keywords: mental health, social movement, Hong Kong, resource loss, exposure to

political violence, social media