

**Prevalence of posttraumatic stress disorder in a sample of children involved in bomb blasts  
in Mbagala-Tanzania, in April 2009**

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On April 29, 2009 around 11:45 AM, military bombs stockpiled at the Tanzania People's Defense Forces (TPDF) armoury in Mbagala, some 14 kilometres from Dar es Salaam city centre, exploded uncontrollably; tearing the armoury walls and roof, flew out, landing in the neighbourhood claiming lives of 26 people, injuring about 600 others and destroying about 9049 homes and other properties. Clearly, this must have been a terrible experience, with psychological as well as physical consequences of which their nature and extent are yet to be established. Children, in fact, are vulnerable to traumatic events, as they are in many cases truly helpless and easier to frighten than adults who have more fully developed physiques, knowledge, social status, emotional resources and perspectives on the situation. The purpose of this study was to investigate the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among the children involved in Mbagala bomb blasts. It was hypothesised that children would not exhibit PTSD symptoms. It was also hypothesized that children would not show sex differences in exhibiting PTSD symptoms. The sample consisted of 520 children (260 boys and 260 girls), who were randomly sampled. PTSD symptoms were diagnosed using self-report measures called the Impact of Event Scale-Revised in children bombs survivors (affected group) and other children who did not experience bomb blasts (comparison group). Since the study was quantitative in nature, data were analysed with the help of Special Package for Social Science (version 15), and presented in frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. Results showed that 93% of children bombs survivors had PTSD symptoms compared to 79% of the comparison group. Contrasted to many studies in this field, this study found no statistical significant sex differences in exhibiting PTSD symptoms. The study concludes that the Mbagala bomb blasts caused psychological disorders to children. It is recommended that PTSD screening be conducted to the affected schools, and provision of psychotherapy services to the children survivors.