

# The Effectiveness of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Integrative Group Protocol in an immediate intervention with Tunisian survivors of the Kesra school's boarding house fire

S. Bourgou, A. Naffeti, E. Kalai, M. Boudali, S. Ghanmi, A. Bouasker

**(unit of psychological assistance to victims of disasters at the tunisian Ministry of Health)**

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On February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018, a fire occurred in a school's boarding house at Kesra, a village in the North West of Tunisia with a significant material damage. Two weeks later, the educational framework of the secondary schools and the local elected officials sought the intervention of the Psychological Assistance Cell (PAC) of the Shock room with the girls who were living in this boarding house. Indeed, the PAC provides the population with specialised psychological support through a team specialized in psychotraumatology in emergency situations. The members of the PAC were recently trained on the Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Integrative Group Protocol. This intervention in Kesra was the first to be performed using this tool on Tunisia.

The aim of the intervention was to evaluate the Acute Stress Disorder (ASD) and to reduce the risk of the evolution to a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among these girls.

The intervention was performed the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Sixty two girls, with a mean age of 17 years, attended the sessions. The group interventions according to the Butterfly protocol were carried out in local secondary schools. The adolescents have been divided into two groups according to their educational level.

Before EMDR, specific assessment was made using the Peritraumatic Distress Inventory-Child and the Peritraumatic Dissociative Experiences Questionnaire - Child. The evolution of the Acute Stress Disorder was made through the analyses of the Subjective Units of Disturbance. The EMDR treatment was given in two sessions (T1, T2), each lasting 90 minutes. The results were very encouraging, showing significantly reduced ASD symptoms and reduced Subjective Units of Disturbance in the majority of the subjects.