

'White Room Torture' A Sensory Denial Method which Obliterates All Sense of Realism

Dipankar Maiti¹, Victoria Sarvand²

¹Nursing Tutor, Sushrutha College of Nursing, Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka, India

²Professor & HOD, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecological Nursing, Adichunchanagiri College of Nursing, Adichunchanagiri University, B.G. Nagara, Mandya, Karnataka, India

How to cite this article: Dipankar Maiti, Victoria Sarvand et al 'White Room Torture' A Sensory Denial Method which Obliterates All Sense of Realism. Volume 9 | Issue 1 | January-June 2023.

Abstract

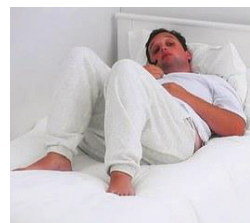
White torture is a form of psychological torment that is generally allied with use in the middle east. The victim is garbed in white clothing and sealed in a room where each and everything including the floor, walls, ceiling, and all furniture and fixtures are painted white in colour. White walls, white bed, white floor, white clothing, white light - everything shall be must in white. On top of that, these people will also be privileged a very quiet and impenetrable or soundproof room. The victim is assisted only white food on a white plate (for example white rice) and given only white brews (such as milk) in a white cup. They are kept in this state for days to even weeks. Though it sounds inoffensive it has been stated that by grudging the brain of access to colour the victims of this agony quickly can be driven to the brink of madness. The victim often commences to suffer both visual and auditory hallucinations. If the suffering lasts long enough, they can become disjointed and even attempt to impairment themselves. But why is it so punitive that some people turn out to be miserable after doing the sentence. In this punishment, the offender will be losing the controlling power on sense organs once days, months and years passed. At last, the victim will become mentally unstable or will loss the memory especially.

Keywords: Sensory Deprivation, Epidemic, Hopelessness, Vertigo, Logical Reasoning, Migraines, Hallucination

Introduction

There is a unique type of punishment which is painstaking to be treacherous and scary, where the colour white is used to deal with gruelling prisoners. There is a punishment entitled 'white room torture' where a person is locked in an entirely white room, white walls, white door and even the food assisted will be only white rice. Even the lavatory and the set-up will be completely white in colour. There will be pin-drop hush in the cell, where the person can hear only his or her voice. After a person starts living

in this room, they shortly forget things, sometimes even how their parents looked also. This torture was typically practised in Iran to make them break down mentally. After knowing about this torture, prison authorities in many countries thought that this could be applied, particularly for those who are defendant of rape cases.¹



White torture, often raised to as white room torture, is a type of mental torture

Corresponding Author:

Dipankar Maiti

Nursing Tutor, Sushrutha College of Nursing, Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka, India

Email Id: dipankarmaiti2015@gmail.com

technique meant at complete sensory denial and separation. A prisoner is held in a cell that divests them of all sanities and distinctiveness. It is chiefly used in Iran; though, there is also evidence of its use by the Venezuelan and the United States intelligence services.²

Methodology

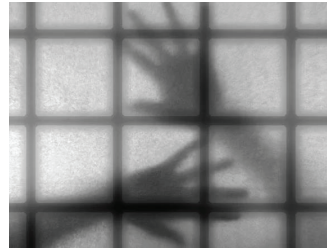
This detailed review includes open data about white room torture. Though the topic White Room Punishment is a unique type of psychological torture method mainly useful for the criminals ineffective to cruel physical tortures. This information collected from the different search engines like 'Cinahl', 'Google Scholar', 'Cochrane' etc. from plentiful review as well as research articles along with a number of renowned articles. The search borne almost 85 papers, including reviews, case reports, case series, and small clinical studies. After excluding the 30 non-English reports without an English abstract, we encompassed the remaining 55, notwithstanding of publication date.

Mechanism

Visually, the prisoner is destitute of all colour. Their cell is completely white: the ramparts, floor and ceiling, as well as their garments and food. Neon tubes are placed above the inhabitant in such a way that no glooms appear. Auditorily, the cell is impenetrable, and void of any sound, voices or social contact. Guards stand in quiet, wearing padded shoes to avoid making any noise. Prisoners cannot receive anything but themselves. In terms of taste and smell, the convict is fed white food—classically, unseasoned rice—to deprive them of these senses. Furthermore, all surfaces are smooth, raiding them of the feeling of touch. Prisoners are frequently held for months, or even years. The effects of white torture are well-documented in a number of endorsements. Classically, prisoners will become depersonalized by trailing personal identity for protracted periods of isolation; triggering hallucinations, or even psychotic breaks.^{3,4}

History of White Room Torture

Evin Prison, situated in Tehran, Iran, has been a political penitentiary since 1972. The convicts there entail of activists, artists, writers, and intellectuals who are exposed to exploitation and agony. In the



month August 2021, Pardon International unconfined a statement concerning the condition within the prison walls as seen in leaked surveillance footage, saying, "It is

shocking to see what goes on inside the walls of Evin prison, but sadly the abuse depicted in these leaked video clips is just the tip of the iceberg of Iran's torture epidemic." One of the forms of chastisement used in Evin is white torture — a life-threatening form of solitary quarantine used on prisoners in order to push them to sign confessions, break their resolve, or give out important information. Though, when the senses are destitute for long periods of time, the convict can experience adverse effects that may be perpetual and disparaging.

The study of sensory deprivation










Canadian psychologist Donald Hebb showed a study on sensory deprivation that he issued in 1949 in the book titled "The Organization of Behavior." Hebb salaried volunteers — which typically consisted of college students — \$20 daily to take part in a sensory scarcity study that took place at McGill University Medical Centre in Montreal, Canada. The subjects were sited in individual rooms and run-down of their senses. The study was hypothetical to last six weeks, but most of the subjects could only last a few days. One of Hebb's partners in the study, Woodburn Heron, wrote, "Nearly all of them stated that the most conspicuous thing about the experience was that they were inept to think visibly about anything for any length of time and that their thought progressions seemed to be precious in other ways," as described by Mother Jones. After coming out of seclusion, the test subjects endured cognitive tests that exhibited they were momentarily mentally impaired.^{5,6}


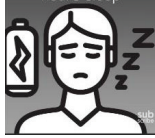










Sensory scarcity warps people's sense of time

A French scientist named Michel Siffre steered a geological study in 1962 in which he planned to perceive an underground glacier in the Alps. The study was only made-up to last for two weeks, but he protracted it to two months and reformed the focus to study human chronobiology. He thoughtful to "live like an animal," without modern amenities or

sunlight. Siffre expected to regulate whether humans have a natural internal clock. In one reasoning test, his team had him count 120 seconds. They found it took Siffre five minutes to count two minutes, meaning he "psychologically practiced five real minutes as though they were two." When the CIA imprisoned Mohamed Ben Soud in total darkness, he was incapable to track the days authorities held him captive.

Clinical Manifestation Series

Sl No.	Time	Effect	Condition (Pictorial)
1.	40 Mins	Sweating (The fitter the person is the sooner he starts to sweat)	
2.	1 Hour	Heart Palpitations (The person may feel that heart is beating too fast)	
3.	2 Hours	Stress (Stress can cause profuse sweating)	
4.	8 Hours	Vertigo (It may appear to be spinning in motion)	
5.	10 Hours	Logical Reasoning (The person's nerves will constantly misfire trying to make connections)	
6.	23 Hours	Hallucinations (Many have reported seeing points of light & geometric shapes)	
7.	1 Day	Anxiety (Women are twice as likely as men to develop it)	
8.	2 Days	Panic Attacks (They can happen when the person is sleeping)	
9.	3 Days	Sleep Patterns (They almost double in length)	

Sl No.	Time	Effect	Condition (Pictorial)
10.	5 Days	Inflammation (Its easy to develop sores on the body)	
11.	6 Days	Fatigue (Typical cycles of 36 hours awake & 12 hours sleep)	
12.	1 Week	Abdominal Pain (The person may get rid of a stomach ache in 5 mins)	
13.	2Weeks	Infection (Being isolated renders the person more vulnerable to infection)	
14.	3 Weeks	Eyes (The person's eyes deteriorate & cannot stand sunlight)	
15.	1 Month	Suicidal Thoughts (Many suicidal people give certain caveats)	
16.	2 Months	Weight Loss (Due to digestion complications)	
17.	6 Months	Sense of Reality (Becomes hard to shake off once the person is released)	
18.	1 Year	Attachment Issues (Romanian children isolated in the 1990s had serious behavioural problems)	
19.	2 Years	Psychosis (Laymen's terms, the person may go crazy)	
20.	3.5 Years	Loss of Identity (The memory may be reset or wiped clean)	
21.	20 Years	Insanity (1 in 5 people will develop mental illness in their lifetime)	

THINGS TO BE CONSIDERED

Hallucinations may be Visual, Physical or Auditory

Scientific studies show when a brain that lacks normal stimulation attempts to make sense of its surroundings, it generates hallucinations in an effort to establish a pattern. Much like a human face in the wood grain of a table, inaccessible detainees see, hear, or feel non-existent ambiances. The samples eyes' obscured by a visor, they reported visions of animals, colour patterns, and light. Some even felt electrical jolts and a tremor from a hallucinated space capsule.

The Practice Yields Questionable Data

After denial of human interface and normal stimuli, the make pliable minds of captives underwent penetrating cross-examination. Iranian convicts provided with paper customary constant pushes to write a acknowledgement to crimes against government leaders in exchange for human interface. The CIA's own KUBARK manual stated the deprivation method pushed "a subject's propensities toward obedience" as they were frantic for company, even their captors'. Ahmed Errachidi, who was destitute of sleep and isolated, broke under interrogation from personnel at Guantanamo Bay.

Sensory Scarcity May Be Used for Curative Instead of Aching

While subjects forced into sensory deficiency suffer harshly, those who seek it willingly may benefit from complete remoteness. Sensory deprivation is an incipient treatment for stress and anxiety, and it's growing in admiration. Meehan Crist of Nautilus vexed a sensory deprivation tank, which is fundamentally an enclosed bathtub filled with saltwater. Pitch black and soundproof, the measured version of this technique often leads to pleasant hallucinations that some compare to a drug-induced experience.⁶

White Torture Appeared from CIA Research into Brainwashing

During the Cold War, the CIA instigated researching a way to reproduce the mind-control tactics hired by countries in opposition to America. They perceived

American soldiers in Korean POW camps transporting anti-US and pro-communist statements, which urged the idea of brain-washing. Hebb in book form his findings in *The Canadian Journal of Psychology*, though he camouflaged it as a study about the effects of living a inactive and uninteresting lifestyle.

Sensory Deprivation May Leave No Physical Mark, So It's Frequently Ignored

Waterboarding is an interrogation technique that includes pouring water into a prisoner's breathing passages to estimate the feeling of being drowned. The practice increased fame during the Spanish Inquisition and sustained until it was outlawed by the Geneva Convention in 1949; the technique's toxic physical effects place it firmly in the category of torture.

Why is "white room torture" shoddier than other torture?

The only reason this is factual is because it's so naive. Gazing at knives puts more fear into a person but he or she at least have something to cause the emotion of fear. Everything is just one colour wherever the person looks. It's like the person are detained in to the point where every angle the person looks him or her will see the same thing.⁹

Filmy References

German artist Gregor Schneider built his room strategy of "Weiße Folter" on this idea.⁷

The TV Series named Brave Episode 10 "Desperate Measures" January 8, 2018. A team member is held in an Iranian black site for grilling. The room is all white, as is her and the sentries clothing and the negligible furniture. The interrogator explains it is intended to cause sensory deprivation, and that bits of colour will be added as she begins to cooperate.⁸

In 2022 Indian picture, Rorschach, the protagonist Luke Antony is exposed to White Room torture in Dubai Prison.

THE WHITE TORTURE EXPERIENCE

Report No. 1 - Amir Fakhraavar was a convict in Evin Prison who was exposed to white torture. In

a conference with CNN, Fakhravar thorough his experience. "We didn't see any colour, all of the cell was white in colour, the floor was white, our clothes were white and the light too, 24 hours, was white," he told. If prisoners wanted to use the toilet, they would slip a white piece of paper under the door and be ushered by protectors with amplified shoes to avoid making noise. Fakhravar endured separation in the white room for eight months, and by the time he got out, he said he couldn't reminisce the faces of his parents.⁵

Report No 2- A Trio of Hikers Were Imperilled to Isolation in Iranian Prison

In the year 2009, Sarah Shourd, her fiancé Shane Bauer, and their colleague Josh Fattal erroneously trekked over the border unravelling Iraqi Kurdistan from Iran. In detention as spies, the three went to Evin prison in Tehran. Shourd and her male friends spent an appraised 410 days curbed to individual cells without human interface. Shourd veteran panic attacks, hallucinations, and unadorned anxiety during her incarceration. She inscribes: "After two months with next to no human interaction, my mind started to slip. Some days, I perceived phantom footsteps coming down the hall. I spent large portions of my days squatted down on all fours by a small slit in the door, heeding." After her proclamation in September 2010, doctors detected Shroud with PTSD, illustrating the practice's long-term psychological impairment.⁶

Report No 3- Many Victims Say the Method Was Shoddier Than Physical Ferocity

A 2016 study by John Leach, of Thrilling Environments Laboratory at University of Portsmouth, directed a lack of social collaboration for prolonged periods of time causes sufferers to experience struggle in launching what is real and what is not. As social beings, humans' brains brawl to adapt to an remote way of life, and many people experience mental breakdowns with perpetual psychological consequences.⁶

CONCLUSION

White Room Torture is another strange type of torture that some countries still practise today as a punishment to those that are imprisoned. It's a severe, pathetic but effective punishment especially for cruel

criminals. So, we, authors have vexed to cover the allied data regarding this this order to make society more and more aware. We hope that the readers will obtain all the information about this condition.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DSM-5- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Fifth Edition)

CIA- Clinical Impairment Assessment

KUBARK- KUBARK COUNTERINTELLIGENCE INTERROGATION

POW-Prisoner of War

CNN- Convolutional Neural Network

PTSD- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

SOURCE OF FUNDING

Self (review aticle), No financial support was provided relevant to this article.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST - Have no conflict of interest relevant to this article

ETHICAL CLERANCE - Not Required

REFERENCE

1. Why Is White Room Torture The Worst Punishment In The World? [Internet]. [cited 2022 Oct 25]. Available from: <https://english.sakshi.com/news/editors-picks/why-white-room-torture-worst-punishment-world-143498>
2. Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) (2004). "In Our Midst: Educational Aids to Work with Survivors of Torture and Organized Violence" (3rd ed.). p. 50 - via Grupo de Accion Comunitaria / Psicosocial.net.
3. "A Psychological Torture Method Called "White Torture"". Unbelievable Facts. 2017-01-06. Retrieved 2020-01-20.
4. David Morgan, Violations of human...rights of the Kurds in Turkey, Kurdish Media, March 22, 2005.
5. The History Of White Torture As A Punishment Method [Internet]. [cited 2022 Oct 26]. Available from: <https://www.grunge.com/627363/the-history-of-white-torture-as-a-punishment-method/>

-
6. "White Torture" Is A Sensory Deprivation Method That Erases All Sense Of Reality [Internet]. [cited 2022 Oct 26]. Available from: <https://www.ranker.com/list/extreme-white-torture-facts/jodi-smith>
 7. Jan Thorn-Prikker, Gregor Schneider: When Violence Takes the Form of a Room, January, 2007.
 8. "The Brave - Desperate Measures". 15 January 2018. Retrieved 2021-11-22.
 9. What is white torture? - Quora [Internet]. [cited 2022 Oct 26]. Available from: <https://www.quora.com/What-is-white-torture>.