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Effectiveness of Group Counseling on the General Health of Depressed Girls in Tarbiyat Moalem University of Tehran-Iran based on Behavioral-Cognition Approach

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ABSTRACT

Background: Mental health is one of the most important components of individual's general health. **Objective:** The research aims to investigate effect of group counseling in cognitive-behavior method to improve mental health of the girls who entered University of Tarbiyat Moalem-Tehran in 2010-11. They were selected randomly. Moreover, they were replaced in two groups of experiment and control. The both groups were examined in two stages: pre-test and post-test. The researcher selected her sample among resident students in dormitory. They were those who were clients of the university clinic for depression. Regarding demographic traits of the tested, some features as marital status, educational field, educational condition, lesson unites, Parents education, description of life place were questioned. It research project is semi-experimental. For doing statistic analysis, at first, pre-test and post-test were administrated, and then the deference between scores of the two stages was computed separately. Finally, the researcher compared difference between pre-test and post-test scores by use of normal test (Calmo Groph-Smironoph). The analysis was by spss software. The Research Instrument: The research used the General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg 1978-28). **Results:** The results showed that in the Normal test (Calmograph-Esmirnoph), group of the inserted scores in analysis has not a significance deviation from normal distribution because the significance level of entire groups is more than 5%. Consequently, there is an adequate condition to do parametric analysis as co-variance analysis. Therefore, analysis of the data was by covariance test. Moreover, the significance level of the test is less than the assumed error level. **Conclusion:** By significance difference between data we conclude that the course of therapy in group counseling based on cognitive-behavioral approach has had a significance effect on improvement of General Health of depressed girls in the Tarbiyat Moalem University.

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INTRODUCTION

General Health is one of the most important issues in the contemporary industrialized modern world. Hygiene World Organization defines the health as perfect physical, mental and social welfare, not absence of disease (Beldror and fallen, 1995). In the field of mental health in particular, the organization has assumed it as one of the necessary criterion for general health. (Haruld Kaplan, 1999) There are different perspectives about the very notion of general health. Luinson et al., for example, mental health consists of individual's feeling toward himself and surrounding world and people with regard to his responsibility for others, his adaptation and cognition of his space and time situation. Majority of psychiatrists recognize capability of adaptation to the environment, flexibility, reasonable and justice judgment in confrontation to the privation, pressures as criterion of mental health. (Milanifar, 1999). Larus (1991) believes that mental health consists of psychic talent to keep harmony, balance and happiness in the difficult situations and conflicts. That is, flexibility to regain balance and ability (Taylur, 2003). that is why, nowadays, training hygienic conducts are emphasized and oriented toward keeping and elevation of health. They should be as firm as possible in order to become hygienic habits. Attention to the health dimensions is not only effective in the health improvement but it also provides an adequate background for growth of implied talents. An important part of the country's young population is studying in the universities. As an important human capital, their role is important for our country in future. As a high way of entry to society, university is a suitable gate to investigate mental health of individuals and educational effective interferences for prevention. Meanwhile, effective planning is conditioned to recognition

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of student situation in order to present effective operations in the important areas. The results of researches show that 28/4% of total students are suffering from one of the for essential depression disorder: 8/7% from anxiety disorders, 4/7% from bad-temper, 5/9% from adjustment and 6/7% from other disorders (Akashe, 1995). The finding of other researchers showed that 57 /55% of university students are in health status and 26/9% of them are approximately suffering from psychological problems as adjustment to the new environment (Jafari et al., 2010). Their research entitled *Investigation of Mental Health of new Entry University students* in Conference of Mental Hygiene.

Finding of a research entitled *Insights of University Students resident in Dormitory in the Field of Effective Environmental Factors on Mental Health of University Students* showed that improvement in security factors and measures of dormitory environment is effective in the general health of university students. (Mohseni et al., 2006)

Thus, with regard to the finding, study planning and operation to recognize the university groups exposed to vulnerability in term of general health and psychic dimensions are the most necessary actions. By results of such actions, we can not only produce hygienic services as counseling, psychotherapy, and drug therapy but also provide improvement in mental health of the university students. Consequently, we can prevent school dropout and preservation of human force and economy of the young generation. Health counseling has a key role in this field. In the different dimensions and areas of life (education, growth, perfection, occupation, marriage, social life), human often faces conflict and challengeable situations and tensions most of which are related to his health and well-being. Such situations, in particular problems related to health, not only affect individual but they exposed individuals and their families to the problem of school dropout and collapse in social interactions. This problem sometimes cause desolation in personality and decrease in ability to define, analyze and plan a problem. In such a condition, the expert protection can help him/her to recognize the problem and consider different resolutions to solve the problem, namely regain his/her balance. In other words, counseling protects individuals to improve their knowledge-motives and skills in recognition of a problem, consciously and volunteer decision-making and implementation of surveillance schedule. (Trns, 1998)

Therefore, the research aims to investigate effect of group therapy by counseling method based on cognitive-behavioral approach to increase level of mental health of girl university students of Tarbiyat Moalem. It intends to decrease depression and improve level of mental health. Cognition is attributed to the internal and mental process or ways in which information become performance Cognitive guidelines are the cognitive instruments which are applied to do a cognitive duty, its dimensions and finding and performing a solution (Akashe, 1995).

Bec's cognitive model: It emphasizes importance of cognitions effects and individual's analysis in creation and continuation of mental disorders. In expressing depression disorders and process of its construction, Bec recognizes the false perceptions and learning maladaptive perspectives. He believes that individual, while recourse to the cognition therapist has continuous and self-critical thoughts. He says we can solve individual's psychological problems by omitting prejudices and correction of false perceptions and training more adjustment insights. (Shafiabadi, 1996)

Methodology:

The interference contains some elements including: increase in information about depression (problem), training body calmness, recognition of inefficient thoughts, cognitive reconstruction training problem solving, training how to omit inefficient thoughts and planning activities.

The present research is semi-empirical and used pre-test, post-test and control group.

Research Steps:

1. Individuals have been selected in the disciplined randomlyway. They were classified into two groups of experiment and control groups randomly.
2. In the experiment group of the independent variable, the group counseling with cognitive-behavioral approach accompanied by course training was exerted.
3. In both groups, pre-test and post-test were administrated.
4. The independent variable was group counseling with cognitive-behavioral and dependent variable was general health.

Statistical Universe and Sampling Method:

The statistical universe of the study was the depressed girls of Tarbiyat Moalem-Tehran University in 2011-12. The sample contains 20 girls. 10 girls were replaced in each group of experiment and control. Moreover, the sampling method was disciplined random. The instrument for gathering data was GHQ. The questionnaire has 28 articles. It was compiled by Goldberg and Hiller (1979). It has four sub-scales: 1. bodily syndrome 2. Anxiety syndrome 3. Social function 4. depression syndrome.

Reliability and Validity of the Test Instrument:

The reliability of GHQ (28 questions) has been reported: 91%.

As one of the most adequate criteria to measure, the test is able to reflect depression and social action in the individuals. The data of the test, based on empirical and clinical observation, are almost a vital characteristic in measuring the four sub-scale mentioned before.

Marking:

Each scale has 7 questions. 1 score belongs to each scale. One score belongs to the whole questionnaire (28 questions). Therefore, the questionnaire gives five separately scores. The best method of marking is Liker Tabl's one: 0-3. The result of analysis of 43 researches by Williams Marry (Goldberg, 1988) showed that the mean of sensitivity is 84% and average of features is 82%. Moreover, the result of introductory investigation in Gilan by Yaqubi Nasr and Shah Mohammadi showed that sensitivity of the test in the cutting moment (by Likeret's marking) was 865% and its feature was 82%. The index of validity and re-testing and Keronbakh's α was 88%. Also validity of the test was 67%-76%. Validity of bisection was 83% and of re-testing was 85% (Cited by Sara Hashemi, 2010).

Administration Method:

The research emphasizes dependent variable (general health) and it was administrated in 9 sessions for the experiment group. The control group was excluded from any training course.

The Research Finding:

Assumption: a training course of group counseling based on cognitive-behavioral approach causes increase in general health of the depressed girl university students.

Index of descriptive statistic related to this assumption contains mean, scale deviation and maximum and minimum variation domain and testers number in two groups of control and experiment in two stages of pre-test and post-test. They are in table 1

The two groups: of control and experiment method in two stages (pre and post-test).

Indexes	Control group	Experiment group	Total		Total	
	PiS	PAS	Pis	pas	Pas	pis total
Mean	23/9	27/9	36/3	6/2	30/1	17/05
standard deviation	8/37	10/03	12/03	3/52	11/ 93	13/32
Scope of variation	27	32	37	10	39	44
Minimum	11	13	13	1	11	1
Maximum	38	45	50	11	50	45
Testees number	10	10	10	10	20	20

The table (1-1) shows that the total mean of the raw score of depression of pre-test of testees who have participated in the research, was 30/1. The mean was 36/3 for the experimental group and 23/9 for the control group. Standard deviation of total score of pre-test is 11/93, the scope of variation of raw score of pre-test was 39 the minimum of which, is 11 and the maximum of which is 50.

Also, table (1) shows that the total means of raw score of post-test of the general health of testees who participated in the research are 17/05. It is different for different groups. In the post-test, the control group's mean is 27/9 and the mean is 6/2 for the experiment group. The standard deviation of the total score of post-test is 13/32. The scope variation of raw score of post-test of testees is 44. Their minimum is 1 and maximum is 45.

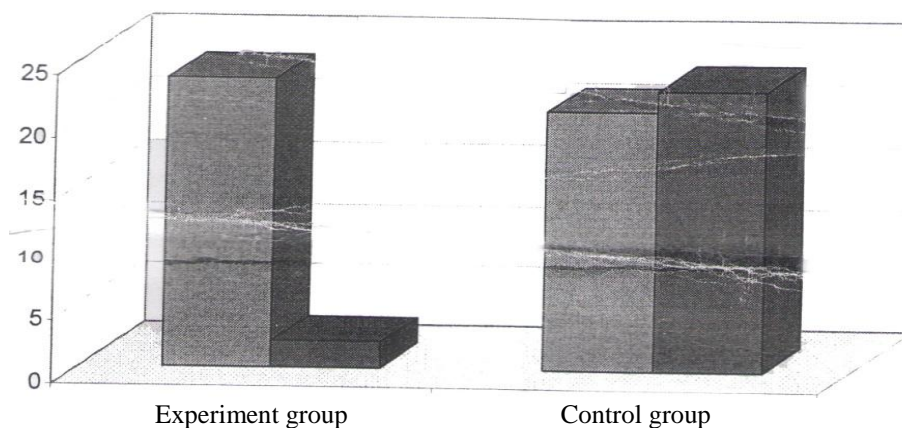


Diagram A: Comparison between pre-test and post-test of depression

Table 2: shows the results of co-variance of depression scores.

Sources of Variance	ss	df	ms	f	Sig/	
Effect of Variable	268/4	1	268/4	6/099	0/024	
Gender	2478/2	1	2478/2	56/317	0/000	
Error	748/1	17	44/0			
Total	3371/0	19				

Table 3: shows the results of variance of Luvin

Groups	Number	Variance	DF1	DF2	F	SIG
Control	0/259	1/359	1	18	1/359	0/259
Experiment	10	12/44				

As we see f is $1/35$ and it is not significant at level $p > .05$ and pre-assumption of equality of variances is correct, namely there is not a significant difference between variances and the pre-assumption of equality of variances is confirmed.

The researcher has used co-variance Statistic Test to consider the research hypotheses. The table (2) shows computations of square roots/the degree of mean of square roots and f . As we know if the computed significance level of the test is less than the assumed error level ($\alpha = 5\%$) of the researcher, we conclude a significant difference between data. In this test, the significance level is less than the assumed error. Also mean of General Health Questionnaire of experiment group (3/36) before treatment reduced to 6/2, namely the scores are in a decline trend. That is, therapy course has been effective in the research sample. According to the mentioned probability, we conclude that therapy course has caused decrease in depression and increase in health.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned, the group counseling based on behavioral-cognition approach has been effective in decrease in depression of girl university students. It showed that the effect of group counseling was effective and significant statistically. The research aimed to compare effect of group counseling based on behavioral-cognition approach on the two groups of experiment and control. Comparison of the mean of scores of pre-test of GHQ did not show any difference between two groups of experimental and control in the pre-intervention stage. We conclude that the significant difference in the mean of difference of pre and post-test scores in the two groups is because of therapeutic group interaction.

To consider the effect of therapist group of behavioral-cognition in increasing mental health of the depressed girl's students, the researcher has compared difference between GH scores of pre and post-test in the two groups by Covariance test. As the above table shows, the difference between the two groups was significant statistically. This finding confirms the research hypotheses and matches those of the other researches in the other fields of cognitive-therapy and demographic role and features as age, marital status, environment, income, and education level... (Coey and Dopec, 1999). The results of multi-dimensional therapies of body calmness, desensitization and cognitive-behavioral intervention were recognized as eminent factors in anxiety therapy of the university students. Fani et al. (2008) believe that cognitive therapy is theoretically powerful for improving mental health. Ansari Brjali, Ahadi and Hosseini Almadani (2008) in a research entitled Effectiveness of group cognitive-behavioral on decrease in anger confirm this therapy (Cited by Sara Hashemi, 2010)15. Another research tries to investigate the level of GH of student of Tarbiyat modares University and its relation to the variables of age, gender, marital status, education level and university. It showed that 38% of students got the scores more than normal average in the entire demographic features. The most spread problems were related to bodily symptoms (33%), anxiety and insomnia (40%), social performance (70%) and depression (19%).

In this research, the sample individuals participated in 12 sessions of groups cognition treatment. In the experimental group, 5/23 (pre-treatment) was reduced to 2. In average, we mainly observe a decline in the scores. In the other words, the course treatment in decrease in the present research was successful. In the mentioned consideration including a research by Nasrabadi et al. (2002), Bek's depression score get 50% reduction, in comparison to the pre and post-test. In the other research (Peterson and Halistid 1998) individuals participated in the 6 sessions of group treatment. The results showed that the mean of the inventory scores of Bek got reduction from 25/8 (pre-treatment) to 15/5 (post-treatment). The researcher suggests researches in the different groups and educational levels for more comprehensive consideration of this method. Moreover, more centers for such courses should be established in the universities and cultural institutions. Distinction and diagnosis of the students exposed to the risk, introducing to the cognition-therapy groups and self-efficiency of individuals for individual self-reliance of clients are the most important points.

The research findings confirm the research hypothesis which says treatment course of group counseling based on behavioral-cognition approach causes decrease in depression of the depressed university girl students of Tarbiyat Moalem University of Tehran-Iran. Also, the method is based on re-consideration and replacement

of positive with negative meaning as well as attention to the pleasant feeling instead of unpleasant emotions. The function of the method techniques in breaking negative thoughts and meaningless cycle of automatic negative thoughts; consequently, consciousness toward trend of improvement in such disturbing thought and the way of confrontation to them and their deletion reduce depression and its signs in the sample research. Also, the factors which provide and reinforce depression were recognized and controlled during the treatment period. Therefore, the sample individuals answered the trend of treatment course gradually. There is a significance relation between mental health, department and bodily symptoms. The maximum degree of norm mean belonged to the medical department. There is not a significance difference between two genders in term of general health. (16) In a research, they investigated spread of personality disorder in the university students. They founded it from 0-16 for men and from 1-.... for women. Ras (2004. Cited by Nasiri et al. 1996, Ibid: 8) reported that some American university students, living in dormitory, are suffering from depression disorder. The result of a research (Zoghi Payedar et al 2004, Ibid: 8)13 showed that the university students who live by their parents are less depressed than those who live in dormitory. In the present study, it is also observed in the group under therapy by their response to the practical assessment (Musavi, 1993 and Kafi, 1998) 13 showed that vulnerability of university students who come from the town was more than others. In the other research entitled *Status of Mental Health and Spread of Psychiatric Disorder of University students of the first Year*, they showed that the M. A. students are suffering from bodily syndromes than the B. A. students. Also, the single students are suffering from depression syndromes more than married students. The difference was significant. In the present study, B. A. single university students are more depressed than the married ones. Meantime, there was not a significance difference between the mean of those boy and girl university students who lived in dormitory or renting house. Although there is a relationship between variable of family and mental problems, many families under study were living with 2000000 R per month. In the present study, group counseling confirms this issue because those families who were living with income less than 5000000 R were suffering from more depression problems. Also there is a significance relationship between the present place of individual life and spread of mental disorder. That is individuals who live in dormitory are more depressed because of their separation from their family. This issue is well observed in the process of group interaction in term of distances of the students from family.

As observed, the finding of the research are confirmed by the assumption of the research which suggests a course of training group counseling based on cognitive-behavioral approach causes increase in mental health of the girl students of Tarbiyat Moallem Tehran-Iran. Also effectiveness of the cognitive-behavioral mechanism on cognitive recognition of inefficient thoughts and orientation of individual under therapy from unpleasant events toward pleasant ones and change in their focus from in toward out protect them to overcome their depression. It is gradually resulted in their omission of negative thoughts and decrease in depression. The approach with group intervention and indirection within the therapy in assignment and simultaneous feedback caused improvement in the level of the student mental health.

Suggestion:

The researcher suggests necessity of attention to the more comprehensive researches and counseling and protective services for different groups and levels of universities through student-centered group works. Such activities should be centralized based on diverse beliefs and values of students. It should be in three areas: Screening, training-centered and prevention. It should be administrated by cooperation of cognitive-therapy and clinic counselors. In the field of vulnerability of these disorders, more investigation is suggested.

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