



The effectiveness of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy on improving quality of life and life expectancy in divorced women in Iran

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General Note



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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy in increasing the quality of life and life expectancy in divorced women. The statistical population consisted of all divorced women referring to psychological clinics of district 4 in Tehran in 2017. In order to achieve the research goals, 30 people were selected using the convenient sampling method from those referring to Yara consulting center in Tehran. They were included in experimental (n = 15 people) and control (n = 15) groups in a completely randomized way. In this study, convenient sampling method was used to select the sample. After sampling, participants responded to Miller's life hopescale (1988) and Ware and Sherbourne's quality of life scale (2007). Then, among these people, those who had a standard deviation lower than the average on the life expectancy and quality of life scale were separated

and entered the test. The treatment was done in groups twice a week as 8 60-minute sessions. The research tool was repeated as a post-test on subjects. For data analysis, covariance analysis was used. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of increasing life expectancy and quality of life.

Keywords: Short-term psychodynamic, life expectancy, quality of life, divorced women

1. INTRODUCTION

Divorce is the cause for the collapse of the most fundamental part of society - family (Malek Mahmoodi Aligudarzi, 2002). It ruins the emotional and psychological balance of family members and, given the severe stress it causes, can cause many mental disorders, especially in women (Qodousi, 2000). Increased substance abuse, mental and psychological problems and various crimes (Molavi Ganjeh & Taghavizadeh, 2010; Riahi et al., 2007), damage to social relations due to the lack of social security (Rostami et al., 2009), depression, panic disorder and insomnia (Hajak, 2001) are all the problems involved with divorced women. According to the World Health Organization, the quality of life means the individual's perception of his status quo, with regard to the culture and value system in which he lives, and the relation of these perceptions to his goals, expectations, standards and priorities. According to the definition, many divorced women lack a good quality of life. However, according to the study by Motie (1999, quoted by (Farzadfar et al., 2006)), divorced women have a limited and painful life due to social and economic pressures that helplessness; sadness and depression are its prominent features. According to the results of Haffari (2009), the mean scores of all dimensions of quality of life (physical and psychological health, social relations and living environment) of divorced women are significantly lower than ordinary women.

Another consequence of divorce is the reduction of life expectancy in divorced women. Hope is the ability to design passages to desired goals in spite of existing barriers and agents of motivation for using these passages (Schneider et al., 2002). Therefore, hope is an ability that helps one to be motivated in spite of the problems that occur in reaching goals. Hope includes a set of conditions that are: a) having valuable personal goals or meanings; and b) perceiving ability to generate strategies in pursuit of these meanings, that is, the individuals consider valuable meanings for themselves according to their abilities (Schneider et al., 2002). Hope to achieve any goal or meaning depends on these two factors. Differences in the evaluation of these two cases in different individuals cause them to show high or low levels of hope, thus exhibiting different behaviors (Dick & Basu, 1994). The beneficial role of hope has been identified both before and after the occurrence of the problem (primary and secondary role) (Schneider et al., 2002). Therefore, in light of what has been said, it is necessary to change the living condition of addicts to increase hope in their lives. Here due to the philosophical point of view and the therapeutic concepts, the question is raised what action is needed to increase the life expectancy of these people which ultimately changes their living conditions. Because of the philosophical point of view and therapeutic concepts of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy, the effectiveness of this treatment is proved in improving the symptoms of the disease. One of the emphasis of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy is the continued effort of therapists for deep emotional experience as a healing element (Lipper & Cavatassi, 2004). Extensive studies in the past two decades have shown that disclosure improves physical and mental health as well as the functioning of immune system and autonomic nervous system both spoken and written (Pennebaker, 1997). The efficacy of psychodynamic psychotherapy on the increase in life expectancy has not been discussed so far, but evidence has shown that this method is effective in treating disorders and psychological problems. For example, in the research by Mohammad et al., (2008), entitled "intensive short-term psychotherapy on a sample of patients with major depression" was helpful and effective. A study by Allen Abbass (2006), entitled "intensive short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy in treatment-resistant depression", concluded that the above treatment would probably result in effective outcomes for treatment-resistant depression. Hagelen et al., (2008) in a study entitled "transmission interpretation in psychodynamic psychotherapy", can actually results in long term effectiveness. The results of this study indicate that transmission interpretation is effective in this treatment method, and in patients with depression, anxiety, personality disorders and interpersonal problems have significantly improved recovery during treatment and even after treatment. Jarareh (2015) conducted a study entitled "comparison of the effectiveness of intensive short-term dynamic psychotherapy (ISTDP) and improving the mental health and marital satisfaction. The results of this study showed a significant difference between the two methods by increasing mental health and marital satisfaction. Kenny (2014) in a study on the effect of short-term dynamic psychotherapy on the anxiety in performing professional music concluded that this method of treatment can reduce and affect the anxiety of professional music performance. In analyzing the effect of ISTDP on treatment of depression, anxiety, despair, and suicide, the prevalence of social harm is one of the obstacles that waste many human capitals. Divorce is one of the causes of the disruption and disintegration of the family, which has

many consequences for the community and can be the source of many social harms such as sexual deviations, suicide, escape from home, robbery, addiction, beggary, stray and so on. Divorce and separation are the most important factor in the fragmentation of the structure of the most fundamental part of society, i.e. family. It is a stressful phenomenon, doubling the vulnerability of individuals, especially women, to physical and psychological problems, and makes the mental disorders of these divorced women inevitable. In the Iranian society, the life of divorced women is confronted with uncertainties and dangers (Noorisanchooli et al. 2018). Among them is parenting in prison, economic problems, loneliness, depression and disappointment, as well as the society's inappropriate attitude towards divorced and widowed women. They face many problems in social relations and in society in the absence of spouses. Given the increasing divorce rate on the one hand and the accompanying problems, especially for divorced women, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy on increasing the life expectancy and quality of life of divorced women in Tehran in 2018.

2. METHOD

The present research is quasi-experimental and it is included in the field of applied and fundamental research. The present research project is a pretest-posttest plan with a control group. The statistical population consists of all divorced women referring to psychological clinics in district 4 in Tehran in 2017.

To achieve the research goals, 30 people were selected using convenient sampling from the clients of Yara consulting center in Tehran, there were included into experimental ($n = 15$) and control ($n = 15$) groups in a completely randomized way. In this study, convenient sampling method was used to select the sample.

3. TOOLS

Quality of life questionnaire (short form)

This self-report questionnaire, which is mainly used to assess the quality of life and health, was developed by Ware and Sherbourne (2007) with 36 items and 8 areas and assesses physical function, social function, physical role, emotional role, mental health, vitality, physical pain and general health. In Iran, the validity of the questionnaire was evaluated using the "comparison of known groups" and "convergence validity" and the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using the statistical analysis of "internal consistency" in the study by Montazeri et al., which was obtained 0.73.

Life expectancy questionnaire

Miller Hope Scale was created in 1988 by Miller and Powers. Miller has reported the validity of this questionnaire as desirable and has mentioned its reliability 0.80, according to Cronbach's alpha.

4. DATA ANALYSIS IN LINE WITH HYPOTHESES

Considering that the objective of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy in increasing the quality of life and life expectancy in divorced women, to investigate the hypotheses, covariance analysis was used to meet the assumptions.

Table 1 Levene test results for consistency of variance of two groups in post-test

Variable	F	DOF 1	DOF 2	Significance level
Quality of life	0.677	1	28	0.417
Physical function	0.925	1	28	0.423
Social function	1.978	1	28	0.176
Physical role	0.002	1	28	0.964
Emotional role	0.045	1	28	0.879
Psychological health	0.961	1	28	0.124
Vitality	0.393	1	28	0.359
Physical pain	0.244	1	28	0.926
General health	0.670	1	28	0.225
Life expectancy	0.774	1	28	0.195

The results of Levene test on the consistency of the variances of the two groups also show that the equivalence of variances is established (Table 1). One of the assumptions of the multivariate covariance analysis is to examine the consistency of variance-covariance matrices. The significance of the box test is greater than 0.05. Therefore, it was concluded that homogeneity was not rejected in variance-covariance matrices (Table 2).

Table 2 The results of the Box's M test on the consistency of variance-covariance matrices

	Box's M	F	Significance level
Pre-test	17.58	0.81	0.691
Post-test	21.15	0.93	0.793

Table 3 Wilks' lambda test results for homogeneity of regression coefficients

	Wilks' Lambda	F	Significance level
Post-test	0.586	1.09	0.57

As you can see, the relevant multivariate statistics, the Wilks' Lambda, are not significant because the significance level is greater than 0.05 (Table 3). Thus, the homogeneity assumption of regression coefficients is established.

Main hypothesis

Short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy is effective in increasing the quality of life and life expectancy in divorced women.

Table 4 Results of covariance analysis on the quality of life and life expectancy

Variable	Sum of squares	DOF	Mean square	F	Significance	ETA square
Quality of Life	811.238	1	811.238	14.644	0.001	0.548
Physical function	5.726	1	5.726	16.46	0.001	0.591
Social function	99.781	1	99.781	38.55	0.001	0.352
Physical role	44.585	1	44.585	13.075	0.001	0.072
Emotional role	210.495	1	210.495	9.307	0.001	0.01
Mental health	87.67	1	87.67	13.747	0.001	0.626
Vitality	24.657	1	24.657	17.189	0.001	0.362
Physical pain	118.249	1	118.249	16.117	0.001	0.126
General health	50.218	1	50.218	5.757	0.001	0.184
Life expectancy	589.93	1	589.93	16.23	0.067	0.921

In Table 4, the results of covariance analysis based on short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy in increasing the quality of life and its components (physical function, social function, physical role, emotional role, vitality, mental health, physical pain and general health) and increased life expectancy in divorced women is considered. Accordingly, in the post-test stage, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of quality of life in the experimental and control groups at the level of $p < 0.001$. Also, in the post-test stage, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of life expectancy in the experimental and control groups (Fig. 1).

5. DISCUSSION

In order to test this hypothesis, covariance analysis was used. The results showed that, after participating in group-based short-term psychodynamic psychiatric sessions, the quality of life score of those who participated in the experimental group had a significant increase compared to those in the control group. Therefore, group-based short-term psychodynamic psychiatric increases the quality of life and life expectancy in divorced women.

This result was consistent with the results of the researches by Mohammad et al. (2008), and Jung (2001), who have pointed to the positive effects of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy on reducing anxiety and depression and increased mental health.

Evolutionary studies have shown that when people experience changes related to their living conditions, such as divorce and major changes in the environment, they may lose their attitude toward themselves and weaken their self-esteem, although not everyone experiences this phenomenon. Expected events that do not occur, such as the possibilities and experiences that one had wished but not able to achieve, are very important and anxious after divorce. These events, through the social comparison mechanism, can affect the individual's self-esteem, which provides the basis for the decline in quality of life and life satisfaction (Lachman, 2004).

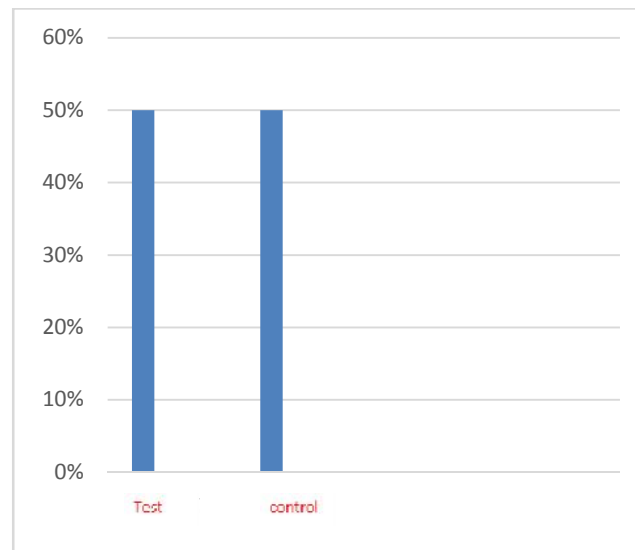


Figure 1 Distribution of subjects in two groups

The results have shown that divorced women can only survive the divorce crisis if they become consistent with changes in the period of divorce. Divorced women who are in flexible in confronting changes and failures of this period of life and do not learn from their experiences, may struggle to avoid accepting their weaknesses and thus experience more failures. They may also turn into weak people who are easily affected; who are very vulnerable to criticism and have a very fragile identity. The best and healthiest way of adaptation for women is a situation in which the personality is so flexible that changes if required, but it doesn't lack a structure that any new experience causes the underlying assumptions of the individual about himself to be questioned (Guindon et al., 2010). Therefore, in working with divorced women and trying to improve the quality of their life, the adaptation of individuals to these changes should be considered.

The issue of adaptation to the changes in the divorce period in short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy is considered by strengthening the defense mechanisms of divorced women and encouraging the abandonment of the immature defective mechanisms. In various researches, the relationship between the suppression of unresolved issues related to psychological changes after divorce and the inhibition of negative and unpleasant emotions due to socioeconomic problems of this period has been proven with low adaptability and avoiding problem solving in individuals (Gibbon et al., 2008). On the other hand, research has shown that positive emotional expression and abandoning immature defensive mechanisms are associated with improved coping styles (Eagle et al., 2009). This issue was reflected in the present study. Participants in the experimental group showed a significant increase in the quality of life after participating in group sessions of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy and encouragement to abandon their harmful defensive style, awareness of their emotions, tendency to accept their emotions and behaviors, and gaining more mature defenses. From the perspective of this research, the main factors in changing the quality of life of divorced women participated in short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy group sessions are adaptation to post-divorce psychological changes, change in the defense style, acceptance of negative emotions and gaining insight into changing their position in the community and in the minds of others.

In explaining this result, we should focus on the effects of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy on improving the attitude of the individual to life. This improvement will be achieved by influencing a wide range of factors, such as the flexibility of the individual in dealing with changes caused by divorce, more acceptances of emotions, increased ability to identify others' emotions, more emotional expression, empathy, and management of challenging emotions. Acquired methods for each person to identify, organize and express their emotions, as well as their response to environmental events and their stressors are affected by short-term

psychodynamic psychotherapy. The view that each person has toward life, although created over time and institutionalized in his personality, can be changed with the experience of an appropriate supportive relationship as well as learning new ways of dealing with personal experiences and external events. Interventions done for increasing inter personal trust and accepting the emotions of others in short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy helps to improve one's vision of life. In fact, after establishing a relationship based on trust with the therapist and passing through the transmission analysis, one should have a different look at her life. What is happening in short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy is not just a relaxed, tense-free relationship with the therapist, but rather it determines the person's increased skill in applying emotions to regulate behaviors and relationships.

6. CONCLUSION

According to the research results, awareness of emotions, the recognition of ineffective defense mechanisms, gaining insight into the cause of the decline in quality of life, awareness of the general psychological changes of the post-divorce period, providing emotional support, accepting self-emotions others, and Encouraging acceptance of constraints and avoidance, sharing experiences, discussing negative feelings about divorce and possible weaknesses, expressing unpleasant feelings, and educating appropriate communication patterns for women can lead to improved psychological well-being through increased quality of life and life expectancy and increase their compatibility.

Ethical Issues

The ethical number for this study is IR.IAU.REC. 1397.517.

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