



The effectiveness of treatment based on acceptance and commitment on sexual performance and emotional safety in men with cardiovascular disease

Majid. Amiri¹

Hasan. Khosh Akhlagh^{2*}

Parinaz Sadat. Sajadian³

Hasan. Rezaie Jamalouei⁴

1. PhD student, Department of Psychology, Naein Branch, Islamic Azad University, Naein, Iran
2. *Corresponding author: Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Naein Branch, Islamic Azad University, Naein, Iran
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran
4. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran

Email: hkhoshakhlagh@yahoo.com | Received: 06.09.2022 | Acceptance: 04.11.2023

Journal of
Applied Family Therapy

eISSN: 2717-2430
http://Aftj.ir

Vol. 4, No. 4, Pp: 520-535
Fall 2023

Original research article

How to Cite This Article:

Amiri, M., Khosh Akhlagh, H., Sajadian, P. S., & Rezaei Jamalouei, H. (2023). The effectiveness of treatment based on acceptance and commitment on sexual performance and emotional safety in men with cardiovascular disease. *aftj*, 4(4): 520-535.



© 2023 by the authors. Licensee Iranian Association of Women's Studies, Tehran, Iran. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0 license) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Abstract

Aim: The aim of the research was to determine the effectiveness of the treatment based on acceptance and commitment on sexual performance and emotional safety in people with cardiovascular disease. **Method:** The research method was quasi-experimental with a pre-test-post-test design with a control group and a two-month follow-up phase. The statistical population of the study was cardiovascular patients in Isfahan city in 2022, and 34 patients were selected using the purposive sampling method and randomly assigned to one experimental group and one control group (17 people in each group). The research tools were Rosen's Male Sexual Performance Questionnaire (2004) and Emotional Safety Questionnaire. Treatment based on acceptance and commitment was implemented in 9 sessions of 90 minutes once a week and the control group was waiting for treatment. The data were analyzed using the statistical method of mixed analysis of variance and Bonferroni post hoc test. **Results:** The results showed that the effectiveness of treatment based on acceptance and commitment and transdiagnostic treatment was on the components of sexual function and emotional safety in cardiovascular patients ($P<0.001$). Also, the results showed that these effects had maintained their stability in the follow-up phase ($P<0.001$). **Conclusions:** Therefore, both interventions can be used to improve the components of sexual function and emotional safety of cardiovascular patients and improve their quality of life.

Keywords: *acceptance and commitment therapy, sexual function, emotion, cardiovascular disease.*

Introduction

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death and disability in Iran, with heart surgeries accounting for around 60% of all surgeries performed in the country (Pourghaneh, Amiri-Najad, & Rezvani-Tavasoli, 2021). Heart surgery is a significant event in individuals' lives, causing disruptions to their economic, professional, and personal well-being, as well as impairing their physical, sexual, and psychological functioning and ultimately reducing their quality of life (Munoz et al., 2017). Cardiovascular disease is a significant factor affecting individuals' quality of life, performance, and sexual satisfaction. This group of diseases is one of the most common chronic illnesses and causes of death in adults worldwide, with its prevalence doubling with each decade of life (Pourghaneh et al., 2021). Sexual dysfunction and reduced sexual activity are common in patients with heart disease, and they can be accompanied by psychological disturbances, leading to a reduction in life satisfaction and ultimately a loss of hope for patients (Beirut et al., 2019). One of the major sexual problems reported in cardiac patients is a decrease or loss of sexual desire attributed to anxiety about having sudden death during sexual activity, misinterpretation of natural signs of sexual arousal, such as increased heart rate and respiration, as heart-related symptoms, and depression following a heart attack, which can lead to sexual dissatisfaction, jeopardize mental health, and, consequently, family breakdown. In addition, inappropriate sexual activity after a heart attack is one of the factors associated with these patients' readmission to the hospital (Stapleton, Jackson, & Worden, 2016). Considering the aforementioned issues, these patients face obstacles in performing self-care, and it is not surprising that poor self-care can lead to recurrent hospitalization and reduced quality of life (Carlson, Riegel, & Moser, 2011). Therefore, one of the essential components of programs to control cardiovascular disease and reduce these patients' psychological problems is educating and using psychological interventions and helping patients adapt to the chronic disease conditions and perform appropriate self-care behaviors. Therefore, in various studies, psychological interventions, such as acceptance and commitment therapy, have been used to improve the psychological problems and quality of life of cardiovascular patients. Thus, the aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy on sexual function and emotional safety in men with cardiovascular disease.

Method

The research method was quasi-experimental with a pre-test-post-test design with a control group and a two-month follow-up phase. The statistical population of the study was cardiovascular patients in Isfahan city in 2022, and 34 patients were selected using the purposive sampling method and randomly assigned to one experimental group and one control group (17 people in each group). The research tools were Rosen's Male Sexual Performance Questionnaire (2004) and Emotional Safety Questionnaire. Treatment based on acceptance and commitment was implemented in 9 sessions of 90 minutes once a week and the control group was waiting for treatment. The data were analyzed using the statistical method of mixed analysis of variance and Bonferroni post hoc test.

Results

The results showed that the effectiveness of treatment based on acceptance and commitment and transdiagnostic treatment was on the components of sexual function and emotional safety in cardiovascular patients ($P<0.001$). Also, the results showed that these effects had maintained their stability in the follow-up phase ($P<0.001$).

Conclusion

The aim of the research was to determine the effectiveness of the treatment based on acceptance and commitment on sexual performance and emotional safety in people with cardiovascular disease. The results showed that both interventions can be used to improve the components of sexual function and emotional safety of cardiovascular patients and improve their quality of life.

The present study, like all research, is subject to limitations based on the conditions and regulations related to scientific research, which can be considered by future researchers in subsequent studies and resolved if possible. Below are the most important limitations discussed. Failure to match the sample individuals based on intervention variables such as education, marriage duration, socioeconomic status, and other demographic variables can be considered as one of the major limitations of this study. Self-report tools (questionnaires) were used in this study, so there are limitations to the use of questionnaires in this research. A purposeful sampling method was used in this study, so there are limitations to this sampling method. This study was conducted on men with cardiovascular disease in Isfahan city, so caution should be taken when generalizing the results to women with cardiovascular disease and patients with cardiovascular disease in other cities.

It is recommended that in future studies, the study sample should be matched based on intervention variables such as marriage duration, education, and socioeconomic status, and the results should be compared to those of this study. It is also recommended to conduct further studies in other parts of the country. It is suggested that other tools such as clinical interviews be used to evaluate research variables and the results be compared to those of this study. It is recommended to use random sampling in future research studies.

References

- Azari Far, B., Lotfi, M.H., Taban Sadeghi, M.R., Fallahzadeh, H., Hosseini, F., & Keyghobadi, N. (2015). The Relationship between Stress and Its Associated Factors with Coronary Artery Disease in Patients Referring to Hospitals of Yazd in 2012. *Toloo-e-behdasht*, 14(6), 125-136. (In Persian)
- Bacon, C. G., Mittleman, M. A., Kawachi, I., Giovannucci, E., Glasser, D. B., & Rimm, E. B. (2006). Prospective study of risk factors for erectile dysfunction. *Journal of Urology*, 176, 217-221.
- Baert, A., Pardaens, S., Smedt, D. D., Puddu, P. E., Ciancarelli, M. C., Dawodu, A.,... & Droogne, W. (2019). Sexual activity in Heart failure patients: Information needs and association with health-related quality of life. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(9), 1570.
- Carlson, B., Riegel, B., & Moser, D. K. (2011). Self care ability of patient with heart failure. *Heart & Lung: The Journal of Critical Care*, 30, 351-359.

- Davison, T. E., Eppingstall, B., Runci, S., & O'Connor, D. W. (2017). A pilot trial of acceptance and commitment therapy for symptoms of depression and anxiety in older adults residing in long-term care facilities. *Aging & Mental Health*, 21(7), 766-773.
- Hasanzadeh, M., Akbari, B., & Abghasemi, A. (2019). The effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy on psychological well-being and sexual functioning in women with a history of infertility. *Ibn-Sina Journal of Nursing and Midwifery*, 27(4), 250-259. (In Persian)
- Hayes, S. C., & Strosahl, K. D. (2005). *A practical guide to acceptance and commitment therapy*. Springer Science, Business Media.
- Jackson, G. (2012). Erectile dysfunction and coronary disease: evaluating the link. *Maturitas*, 72, 263-264.
- Kuhaneshin Tarmi, F., Afshari Nia, K., & Kakabaraei, K. (2021) Comparison of the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) and transdiagnostic treatment in increasing life satisfaction in nurses employed in social security hospitals in Kermanshah City. *Methods and Psychological Models Quarterly*, 12(42), 57-69. (In Persian)
- Magheghian Gortani, M. (2021). *Developing an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Package for Female Sexual Desire/ Arousal Disorder and Comparing Its Effectiveness with Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy on Sexual Desire/ Arousal Disorder, Sexual Intimacy, and Sexual Self-Concept in Married Women Referring to Counseling Centers in Isfahan City (Doctoral dissertation)*. Yasouj Branch, Islamic Azad University. (In Persian)
- Moons, P., Van Deyk, K., Marquet, K., De Bleser, L., Budts, W., & De Geest, S. (2017). Sexual functioning and congenital heart disease: Something to worry about? *International Journal of Cardiology*, 121, 30-35.
- Peng, Y., Fang, J., Huang, W., & Qin, S. (2019). Efficacy of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Heart Failure: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Studies. *International Heart Journal*, 60(3), 665-670.
- Pourghaneh, P., Amiri Nejad, P., & Razavi Tousi, SM. (2021). The Effect of Cardiac Rehabilitation on the Level of Sexual Satisfaction in Patients after Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting Surgery. *Journal of Guilan University of Medical Sciences*, 30(117), 5-13. (In Persian)
- Salonia, A., Capogrosso, P., Clementi, M. Ch., Castagna, G., Damiano, R., & Montorsi, F. (2013). Is erectile dysfunction a reliable indicator of general health status in men? *Arab Journal of Urology*, 11(3), 203-211.
- Sooki, Z., Sharifi, KH., Taghribi, Z., & Nametian Fatemi, F. (2020). The Effect of Cognitive-Behavioral Intervention on Anxiety in Patients with Cardiovascular Disease: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *FAYEZ*, 24(4), 462-472. (In Persian)
- Stephoe, A., Jackson, S. E., & Wardle, J. (2016). Sexual activity and concerns in people with coronary heart disease from a population-based study. *Heart*, 102(14), 1095-1099.
- Tabatabaei, AS., Sajadiehian, E., & Moatamadi, M. (2017). The Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on Sexual Performance, Sexual Satisfaction, and Sexual Self-Efficacy in Women with Sexual Disorders. *Journal of Behavioral Sciences Research*, 15(1), 84-92. (In Persian)
- Taghvaizadeh, M., Akbari, B., Khanzadeh Abbas Ali, H., & Mashkabidi Haghghi, M. (2019). Comparison of the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy on emotion regulation and responsibility in

Amiri et al. | The effectiveness of treatment based on acceptance and commitment on sexual performance and...

obsessive-compulsive personality disorder. *Journal of Applied Psychological Research*, 10(2), 119-136. (In Persian)