



Comparison of the effectiveness of two therapeutic approaches based on acceptance and commitment and emotion-oriented therapy on the level of perceived stress, chronic pain and adherence to treatment in diabetic elderly

Reza. Rahimi¹

Hasan. Ahadi^{2*}

Biouk. Tajeri³

Anis. Khoshlahjeh Sedgh⁴

1. PhD Student in General Psychology, Dept., of Psychology, Emirates Branch of Islamic Azad University, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
2. *Corresponding author: Professor, Department of Psychology, UAE Branch, Islamic Azad University, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Karaj Branch, Islamic Azad university, Karaj, Iran
4. Assistant Professor, Department of Health Psychology, Qom Medical Sciences Unit, Islamic Azad University, Qom, Iran

Email: drahadi5@gmail.com | Received: 17.06.2022 | Acceptance: 06.07.2023

Journal of Applied Family Therapy

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

Vol. 4, No. 4, Pp: 594-611
Fall 2023

Original research article

How to Cite This Article:

Rahimi, R., Ahadi, H., Tajeri, B., & Khoshlahjeh Sedgh, A. (2023). Comparison of the effectiveness of two therapeutic approaches based on acceptance and commitment and emotion-oriented therapy on the level of perceived stress, chronic pain and adherence to treatment in diabetic elderly. *Aftj*. 4(4), 594-611.



© 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: One of the most important challenges facing health care is providing pain management programs for elderly people who suffer from chronic and acute pain. Therefore, the aim of this research is to answer the question of whether treatment methods based on acceptance and commitment, and emotion-based treatment are effective on the level of perceived stress, chronic pain and adherence to treatment in the elderly with diabetes. **Method:** The research design of the present study is a semi-experimental one with a pre-test-post-test design with a control group. The subjects were randomly assigned to two experimental and control groups. The statistical population of this research is all diabetic elderly referring to the health centers of Rafsanjan who have symptoms of stress and chronic pain. Using the available sampling method based on random selection, people were placed in two experimental and control groups. And after the necessary arrangements with the elderly with diabetes and symptoms of stress and chronic pain who had the necessary conditions to participate, 30 people in the experimental groups (15 people in each group) and 15 people in the control group were randomly replaced and selected. **Results:** The findings showed that the groups were not significantly different in terms of gender, age and education level ($p>0.05$). Also, both treatment methods based on acceptance and commitment and emotion-based treatment, compared to the control group, reduce stress, chronic pain and increase treatment adherence in diabetic elderly ($p<0.001$) and the difference between the two methods There is significance ($p>0.05$). **Conclusion:** According to the findings of this research, it can be said that two therapeutic approaches based on acceptance and commitment, and emotion-oriented therapy are effective in improving perceived stress, chronic pain and adherence to treatment in diabetic elderly compared to the control group.

Keywords: treatment based on acceptance and commitment, emotion-based treatment, stress, pain, adherence to treatment.

Introduction

Considering the fact that the elderly community both in the world and in Iran constitutes a significant part of the population and is increasing every year, the importance of examining its mental health becomes clearer. This group is exposed to a lot of stress due to their age and special social situation (Lashani, 2013).

On the other hand, recent researches show that combined treatments, i.e. medicine, drugs and psychotherapy, are better than only drug treatment (Morshedi et al., 2016). One of the non-pharmacological treatments is acceptance and commitment-based therapy, which studies show the effectiveness of this treatment for chronic pain among elderly people (Bardi et al., 2020).

Acceptance and commitment is a third-wave behavioral therapy approach that aims to increase participation in activities that provide meaning, validity, and value to people with persistent pain or distress (Paolini et al., 2020). It seems to be appropriate for the elderly population because many older people may have their own value orientation due to awareness of limited time to live (Mirk et al., 2011).

Also, emotion-based therapy is also a rehabilitation therapy that aims to recognize emotions and transform them into understandable messages and constructive behaviors. Emotion-oriented therapy is one of the therapeutic methods that focuses on the persistent negative cycles of interaction due to deep emotional vulnerability. This method tries to reduce confusion by intervening at the emotional level in order to promote close interactions that lead to greater interest and intimate relationships (Morshedi et al., 2014).

The relationship cycle emphasizes emotion-focused therapy on consistent and secure attachment patterns through care, support, and mutual attention to the needs of self and others (Smeri et al., 2021).

The elderly are more prone to depression and anxiety due to reduced self-confidence, lack of activity and movement, loss of friends and relatives, reduced material and physical independence, and suffering from chronic diseases. Taking into account the rapid growth of the elderly population and the fact that the elderly suffer from a decrease in their physical and mental abilities due to old age and the reduction of their abilities, and all kinds of diseases and mental problems threaten them, paying attention to the health of the elderly is of particular importance. Therefore, determining and comparing the effectiveness of two therapeutic approaches based on acceptance and commitment, and emotion-oriented therapy on the level of perceived stress, chronic pain and adherence to treatment in the elderly with diabetes will be very useful and enlightening.

One of the most important challenges facing health care is the provision of pain management programs for elderly people who suffer from chronic and acute pain. Unrelieved pain can be associated with depression, anxiety, fear, impaired physical function, impaired walking, and malnutrition. Ethical commitment to the management of pain and the relief of those who suffer is at the core of the professional obligations of health care (Lazaro et al., 2013). Therefore, the researcher decided to investigate the three problems of stress, chronic pain and non-adherence to treatment in diabetic elderly, which of these approaches has the ability to improve stress, chronic pain and adherence to treatment?

Method

The research design of the present study is a semi-experimental one with a pre-test-post-test design with a control group. The subjects were randomly assigned to two

experimental and control groups. The statistical population of this research is all diabetic elderly referring to the health centers of Rafsanjan who have symptoms of stress and chronic pain. Using the available sampling method based on random selection, people were placed in two experimental and control groups. And after the necessary arrangements with the elderly with diabetes and symptoms of stress and chronic pain who had the necessary conditions to participate, 30 people in the experimental groups (15 people in each group) and 15 people in the control group were randomly replaced and selected.

Results

The findings showed that the groups were not significantly different in terms of gender, age and education level ($p>0.05$). Also, both treatment methods based on acceptance and commitment and emotion-based treatment, compared to the control group, reduce stress, chronic pain and increase treatment adherence in diabetic elderly ($p<0.001$) and the difference between the two methods There is significance ($p>0.05$).

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to determine the effectiveness of treatment methods based on acceptance and commitment, and emotion-oriented therapy on the level of perceived stress, chronic pain and adherence to treatment in diabetic elderly. The findings of this research showed that the therapeutic approach based on acceptance and commitment improved perceived stress, chronic pain and adherence to treatment in diabetic elderly.

According to the findings of this research, it can be said that two treatment approaches based on acceptance and commitment, and emotion-based treatment are effective in improving perceived stress, chronic pain and adherence to treatment in diabetic elderly compared to the control group. In addition, the results showed that there was a significant difference between the two treatments in the variable of perceived stress, chronic pain, and adherence to treatment in diabetic elderly. The treatment based on acceptance and commitment has been able to improve the perceived stress, chronic pain and adherence to the treatment of diabetic elderly to a greater extent than the emotion-based treatment. In the present study, the effectiveness of treatment based on acceptance and commitment on reducing pain, perceived stress and improving adherence to treatment for the elderly based on principles such as acceptance, failure, self as background, living in the moment, value and committed action is significant. Acceptance and commitment therapy is an effective treatment for a wide range of concerns, and so far limited research has been published on the use of acceptance and commitment therapy in the elderly. The acceptance and commitment model of therapy is appropriate for this population because many older adults may have higher values due to the knowledge that their lifespan is limited. Considering the concept of old age and improving their health, more research should be done in the direction of the health of the elderly. Based on the present research, it is possible to deal with this issue by using available facilities and effective treatment based on acceptance and commitment.

References

- Abdolazimi, M., & Niknam, M. (2019). The Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on Social Support Perception and Body Dissatisfaction in the Elderly. *Aging Psychology*, 5(1), 13-25. (In Persian)
- Abdolghaderi, M., Kafi, S. M., Saberi, A., & Ariaporan, S. (2018). Effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy on hope and pain beliefs of patients with chronic low back pain. *Caspian Journal of Neurological Sciences*, 4(1), 18-23. (In Persian)
- Aghili, S. M., & Arbabi, N. K. (2021). The effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy on depression and chronic pain among abused women. *Family Pathology, Counseling and Enrichment Journal*, 6(2), 27-34. (In Persian)
- Asmari Bardezard, Y., Khanjani, S., Mousavi Asl, E., & Dolatshahi, B. (2021). Effect of Emotion-focused Therapy on Anxiety, Depression and Difficulty in Emotion Regulation in Women With Binge Eating Disorder. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology*, 27(1), 2-15. (In Persian)
- Behrad, B., Bahrami Ehsan, H., Rostami, R., & Sadeghyan, S. (2014). The Effect of emotion-focused and cognitive interventions on reduction of stress in CABG patients by increasing HRV resonance frequency. *Health Psychology*, 3(11), 19-41. (In Persian)
- Bhowmik, M. A. (2020). Grounded Theory Investigation of the Subjective Responses from Partners in Couples Where Infidelity Has Occurred. Faculty of Psychology, The City University of New York, America, 98-116.
- Brady, A., Baker, L. R., & Miller, R. S. (2020). Look but don't touch? Self-regulation determines whether noticing attractive alternatives increases infidelity. *J Fam Psychol*, 34(2): 135
- Gili, Sh., Sadeghi, V., Alizadeh, A., & Rezaei, H. (2019). Comparing the effectiveness of emotion-oriented therapy and transcranial direct electrical stimulation therapy on anxiety and depression of coronary heart disease. *Journal of Health Psychology* 9(4): 45-62. (In Persian)
- Hadi toroghi, H., & Masoudi, S. (2019). The Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on the Reduction of Perceived Stress in the Elderly Afflicted by Chronic Pain. *Aging Psychology*, 5(1), 1-11. (In Persian)
- Hassanabadi, H., MOJARRAD, S., & SOLTANIFAR, A. (2012). The evaluation of emotionally focused therapy (eft) on marital adjustment & positive feeling of couples with extra marital relations. *Research in Clinical Psychology and Counseling*, 1(2). (In Persian)
- Hayes S. C., Strosahl K., & Wilson, K. G. (1999). *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An experiential approach to behavior change*. New York: Guilford Press, 33-37.
- Hoseininezhad, N., Alborzi, M., & MamSharifi, P. (2021). Effectiveness of cognitive behavioral counseling based on acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) for psychological flexibility in drug-abusing mothers. *Journal of psychologicalscience*, 20(107), 2011-2025. (In Persian)
- Hulbert-Williams, N. J., Storey, L., & Wilson, K. G. (2015). Psychological interventions for patients with cancer: psychological flexibility and the potential utility of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. *European journal of cancer care*, 24(1), 15-27.
- Iran Dost, F., Neshat Dost, H., & Nadi, M. (2013). The effect of treatment based on acceptance and commitment on the quality of life of women with chronic back pain. *Behavioral Sciences*, 8(1): 89-96.

- Izadikhah, A., Ansari, M., Rezaei, H., & Haghayegh, A. (2019). Comparing the effectiveness of mindfulness and relaxation therapy on pain intensity in patients with migraine headaches. *MJMS* 11(3): 1774-1764. (In Persian)
- Janbozorgi, M., Agah Heris, M., Mousavi, E., Alipour, A., Golchin, N., & Nuhi, S. H. (2013). Comparison of Therapy Based on Problem-solving Skills and Confronting with Weight Management Therapy Cognition in Body Mass Index (BMI) Reduction and Improvement of Weight Efficient Lifestyl. *Clinical Psychology and Personality*, 11(2), 1-12.
- Jelodari, S., Sodagar, S., & Bahrami Hidaji, M. (2020). The effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on psychological flexibility and cognitive emotion regulation in women with breast cancer. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 13(4), 527-548. (In Persian)
- Kingston, J., Becker, L., Woeginger, J., & Ellett, L. (2020). A randomised trial comparing a brief online delivery of mindfulness-plus-values versus values only for symptoms of depression: Does baseline severity matter?. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 276, 936-944.
- Kocovski, N. L., Fleming, J. E., & Rector, N. A. (2009). Mindfulness and acceptance-based group therapy for social anxiety disorder: An open trial. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 16(3), 276-289.
- Lashani, L. (2013). The effectiveness of the intervention based on acceptance and commitment (ACT) along with mindfulness on the marital satisfaction of spouses of spinal cord injury veterans. *University of Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences*, 11 (3): 56-60
- Lazaro, H., Capones, T., & Antonette, R. (2013). Relationship of resilience with happiness and mental health to students. *Journal of Psychology*, 38(6): 337-44.
- Masjedi, M. A., Khalatbari, J., Abolghasemi, S., Tizdast, T., & Khah, J. K. Comparison of the Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Emotion-Focused Therapy on Anxiety Sensitivity in Cardiac Patients. *IJABS*, 7(3): 13-24. (In Persian)
- Masumian, S., Shair, M. R., Shams, J., & Momenzadeh, S. (2013). The effect of mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy on self-efficacy of the female with chronic low back pain. *Research in Medicine*, 37(3), 158-163. (In Persian)
- Mirec, H., Donte, F., Robins, H., & Melisa, D. (2011). Relationship of emotion regulation with mental health and quality of life. *J Social Behavior* 2011; 32: 323-34.
- Mohammadi, S. Y., & Soufi, A. (2020). The effectiveness of acceptance and commitment treatment on quality of life and perceived stress in cancer patients. *Health Psychology*, 8(32), 57-72. (In Persian)
- Morshedi, M., Davarniya, R., Zahrakar, K., Mahmudi, M. J., & Shakarami, M. (2016). The effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) on reducing couple burnout of couples. *Iranian Journal of Nursing Research*, 10(4), 76-87. (In Persian)
- Morshidi, M., Davarnia, R., Zahra Kar, K., Mahmoudi, M. J., & Shakrami, M. (2014). The effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on reducing couples' marital burnout. *Iranian Nursing Scientific Association*, 4: 24-34. (In Persian)
- Narimani, M., Ariapouran, S., Abolghasemi, A., & Ahadi, B. (2010). The Comparison of the Effectiveness of Mindfulness and Emotion Regulation Training on Mental Health in Chemical Weapon Victims. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 2(4), 61-71. (In Persian)

- Naserinia, S., & Borjali, M. (2020). The Effectiveness of Emotion-Focused Therapy on Obsessive Symptoms in Patients With Corona Disease.. *Clinical Psychology Studies*, 10(39), 135-155. (In Persian)
- Paolini, D., Pagliaro, S., & Pacilli, M. G. (2020). Italian bystanders' reactions to intimate partner violence within gay-men couples: The role of infidelity and gender-role expression. *Psicologia sociale*, 15(1), 67-79.
- Posht Mashhadi, M., Yazdandoost, R., Asgharnejad, A. A., & Moridpoor, D. (2004). The Efficacy of Cognitive-Behavior Therapy on Perfectionism, Need for Approval, and Depressive Symptoms in Patients Afflicted with Pain Disorder. *IJPCP*, 9(3), 22-32. (In Persian)
- Rassu, F., Linsenbardt, H., Hahn, H., & Meagher, M. (2018). Chronic perceived stress heightens laboratory pain in healthy young adults. *The Journal of Pain*, 19(3), S13.
- Roditi, D., & Robinson, M. E. (2011). The role of psychological interventions in the management of patients with chronic pain. *Psychology research and behavior management*, 41-49.
- Rodriguez, M. A., Xu, W., Wang, X., & Liu, X. (2015). Self-acceptance mediates the relationship between mindfulness and perceived stress. *National Library of Medicine*, 116(2), 513-522.
- Soltani, M., Shairi, M. R., Roshan, R., & Rahimi, C. R. (2014). The impact of emotionally focused therapy on emotional distress in infertile couples. *International journal of fertility & sterility*, 7(4), 337.
- Wersebe, H., Lieb, R., Meyer, A. H., Hofer, P., & Gloster, A. T. (2018). The link between stress, well-being, and psychological flexibility during an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy self-help intervention. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 18(1), 60-68.
- Xu, W., Zhou, Y., Fu, Z., & Rodriguez, M. (2017). Relationships between dispositional mindfulness, self-acceptance, perceived stress, and psychological symptoms in advanced gastrointestinal cancer patients. *Psycho-oncology*, 26(12): 2157-2161.
- Zeidan, F., Grant, J. A., Brown, C. A., McHaffie, J. G., & Coghill, R. C. (2012). Mindfulness meditation-related pain relief: evidence for unique brain mechanisms in the regulation of pain. *Neuroscience letters*, 520(2), 165-173.