Structural model of anxiety disorders based on corona anxiety, mental health and the level of health concern with the mediating role of coping strategies in pregnant women

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Abstract

Aim: The current research aims to present a structural model of anxiety disorders based on COVID-19 anxiety with the mediating role of coping strategies in pregnant women. **Methods:** This study is applied in terms of its objective, and descriptive-correlational and structural equation modeling in terms of its implementation. Data collection methods included both library and field research. In the field research, questionnaires were used to collect necessary data, including the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-13) questionnaire by Spitzer et al. (2006), the COVID-19 Anxiety questionnaire by Alipour et al. (2019), and Lazarus and Folkman's (1988) coping strategies. SPSS22 and AMOS software were utilized for data analysis. **Results:** The results indicated that anxiety disorders can be predicted based on COVID-19 anxiety (p<0.01). Additionally, coping strategies were found to play a mediating role in the relationship between anxiety disorders and COVID-19 anxiety (p<0.01). The study also revealed a significant association between anxiety disorders or COVID-19 anxiety and the mediating role of coping strategies in pregnant women (p<0.01). **Conclusion:** Therefore, it can be concluded that anxiety disorders in pregnant women can be predicted by COVID-19 anxiety with the mediation of coping strategies.

Keywords: Anxiety disorders, corona anxiety, coping strategies, pregnant women.

Introduction

One of the significant situations in women's lives is pregnancy. During pregnancy, women experience many new events and face different physical and psychological conditions. Physical changes in pregnant women are due to hormonal changes, which lead to increased fatigue, physical changes, quicker exhaustion, sensitivity, and many other issues (Proscia, Anderson & Manz, 2018). Alongside physical changes, many psychological changes also occur during pregnancy, including increased stress, anxiety, and depression, mood sensitivity and irritability, different trends in interpersonal communications and relationships with partners, among many others (Scott & Bruce, 2017). Although pregnancy is considered a joyful period for women, it also involves physical and psychological problems that affect not only the woman but also her spouse and family (Sirron, 2019). Anxiety and its consequences during pregnancy are of significant prevalence and importance (Chen, Chang & Zhang, 2020) and therefore, anxiety disorders are considered as one of the distressing disorders (Milson, 2020).

Coping strategies are a set of cognitive and behavioral efforts by an individual aimed at interpreting and amending a stressful situation, leading to a reduction in the resultant suffering. They evaluate a wide range of thoughts and actions employed by individuals when facing internal or external stressors (Hanks, Kuested, Antomaniz & Deoda, 2020). Research indicates the mediating role of coping strategies in enhancing resilience against anxiety disorders, especially COVID-19 anxiety. Xixi, Zheo & Gang (2018) studied the relationship between anxiety disorders and coping strategies in students. According to the findings of this study, a significant relationship was observed between anxiety disorders and coping strategies.

The emergence of various psychological disorders and physical illnesses due to COVID-19, the appearance of new waves, and the World Health Organization's assertion that COVID-19 should be considered a seasonal illness, which the world will grapple with for years, are just some of the factors emphasizing the need for research in this area. The prevalence of COVID-19 in recent years and maternal health during pregnancy, particularly considering the unknowns about its effect on the fetus, is of high importance. Given the importance of pregnancy, and the existence of different COVID-19 strains in epidemic waves, addressing factors related to this period, considering the conditions caused by COVID-19, is deemed important. Therefore, this study, considering its potential applications for the community of pregnant women, has been focused upon. This is because neglecting the physical and mental health issues of pregnant women can lead to more severe problems, including miscarriage; thus, the importance of this study is felt. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. Anxiety disorders based on COVID-19 anxiety are predicted in pregnant women.
2. Coping strategies play a mediating role in the relationship between anxiety disorders and COVID-19 anxiety in pregnant women.

Method

This study is applied in terms of its objective, and descriptive-correlational and structural equation modeling in terms of its implementation. Data collection methods included both library and field research. In the field research, questionnaires were used to collect necessary data, including the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-13) questionnaire by Spitzer et al. (2006), the COVID-19 Anxiety questionnaire by

Alipour et al. (2019), and Lazarus and Folkman's (1988) coping strategies. SPSS22 and AMOS software were utilized for data analysis.

Results

The results indicated that anxiety disorders can be predicted based on COVID-19 anxiety ($p < 0.01$). Additionally, coping strategies were found to play a mediating role in the relationship between anxiety disorders and COVID-19 anxiety ($p < 0.01$). The study also revealed a significant association between anxiety disorders or COVID-19 anxiety and the mediating role of coping strategies in pregnant women ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusion

This research aimed to present a structural model of anxiety disorders based on COVID-19 anxiety with the mediating role of coping strategies in pregnant women. As the findings indicate, coping strategies play a mediating role in the relationship between anxiety disorders and Corona anxiety in pregnant women.

The findings of this study are significant in several respects; from one perspective, they can be considered as an important guideline for future studies that encompass group, family, couple, and individual interventions. Another aspect can be seen as a new approach to changing individuals' understanding and interpretation of psychological processes, as the mentioned results rely on them. Overall, this study demonstrated that coping strategies play a mediating role in the relationship between anxiety disorders and Corona anxiety in pregnant women, confirming this relationship. The limitations of this study include restrictions on the population sample, sampling method, and the nature of its self-reported data, which introduces the possibility of bias. To overcome this limitation, it is better to use structured clinical interviews, and assessments by family members and peers. Given the nature of COVID-19, which has not yet been comprehensively and thoroughly examined in its different aspects, it is recommended that other varied variables also be studied in pregnant women in the context of COVID-19. Furthermore, conducting this research in other communities (including clinical settings) will provide a better understanding of it.

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