

The effectiveness of mindfulness training on individual-social adjustment in employed women

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ABSTRACT

Background and Aim: Mindfulness can increase self-esteem and overcome psychological problems in women. The present study has been conducted to determine the effectiveness of workshops educating life skills and mindfulness by enhancing individual self-esteem of depressed employed women in health care system. **Methods and material:** The present study is a quasi experimental Study. Target population consisted of all employed women in Health and Treatment Network. In order to sample, sampling was done based on census and participants were divided into two intervention and control groups randomly (each group included 15 participants). Before the workshops begun, Bell Adaptation Questionnaire and Beck Depression Questionnaire were fulfilled by participants of each group. Intervention group passed 6 sessions of workshops educating life skills, mindfulness, stress management, ability to solve problems and control group received no education. A week after intervention conducted, both mentioned questionnaires were fulfilled by intervention and control groups. Gathered data were entered to SPSS. In order to compare the mean average of scores between groups, covariance test was used. **Results:** Results derived from this study demonstrated that mindfulness score enhanced and depression score was decreased in intervention group which was significantly meaningful (p. value considered $P > 0.05$, ANCOVA=0.38). **Conclusion:** According to the results of this study, it can be concluded that education by workshops can be effective in reducing depression and enhancing mindfulness of employed depressed women which is recommended to be applied in other groups.

Keywords: Life Skills, mindfulness, adaptation, employed women

Introduction

Considering the differences between the traditional and modern roles of employed women, the active participation of women in the labor market causes profound fatigue, chronic stress and ultimately depression [1-3]. In fact, one of the issues that affect women's mental health is their numerous responsibilities in the family and society. Long working hours, gender discrimination, failure to receive fair rights, interference of family life and marital duties with work tasks and lack of occupational, economic and psychological supports are some of the most important challenges that hurt employed women and make disturbance in women's behavior and break the demographic compatibility of employed women [4-6].

Adaptability is a continuous compliance to changes and a connection between themselves and their surroundings so that

it will be possible the maximum self-actualization with social welfare with regard to the external realities compliance. With this in mind, adaptability is knowing the fact that one has to follow his objectives and consider the socio-cultural frame work at the same time [7,8] Inconsistency is the extreme emotional or behavioral reactions in response to stressful situations of everyday life. In this case, the person is not capable of making adaptation to the changes of life, which will interfere with his daily functions [9, 10].

Another useful approach that is used today to reduce anxiety and stress is mindfulness which is used in cognitive therapy of Third Wave approaches. "Mindfulness" does not mean positive thinking. "Mindfulness" is not an illusion. "Mindfulness" is not an effort to empty the mind or a way to escape from life, but, it is an effort to be truly alive [11, 12]. Women who work outside encounter problems in creating inner and interpersonal balance due to the double burden of work inside and outside the home so they need to learn effective techniques to improve interpersonal communication and solve personal problems. Life skills training workshop with mindfulness strengthen intimate relationship with others, especially family members, and improves mental and social health and will end all unhealthy relationships and teaches people how to actively listen to others to understand their situation and how to make others aware of their feelings and needs in order to obtain their demands and keep their partner satisfied at the same time [13]. According to

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this study, the question is that “can mindfulness training be useful to improve individual and social compatibility and reduce depression in employed women?”

Methods and Material

This research was quasi-experimental study conducted at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. The participants of study consisted of all of the employed women in the kazerone healthcare network in Fars province. The sampling was based on census. But the placement of people in both experimental and control groups were done randomly based on random allocation after and the sample size for each group was 15. Intervention was a workshop and to prepare the content of the workshops (effective communication - empathy - the Interpersonal relationship - problem solving - coping with stress) various sources related to cognitive-behavioral counseling were used. Also four hours of the workshops was practical training of Mindfulness. The workshops were held through 6 sessions of 4-hour (one session per week). Team work was done during the workshops.

Data Gathering Tool

Bell Adjustment Inventory that was developed in 1961 by Bell, was used to evaluate adult compatibility questionnaire. This questionnaire had five separate measuring levels of personal and social adjustment, adaptability at home, compatibility health, social adjustment, emotional adjustment and job adjustment.

Inclusion criteria included being married and duration of marriage being more than 1 year. After asking people to participate in the workshop and their referral, the sample was selected by convenience sampling and randomly divided into two groups (intervention and control). Before the start of the workshop Bell Adjustment Inventory and Beck Depression Inventory were completed by both groups. A week after the workshop, the questionnaires will be completed again by the same groups. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was calculated 0.94 by the experts. The validity of questionnaires has been standardized earlier in Iran by Delavar for the community of veterans' athletes. Agha mohammadian Sherbaf also studied the same issue and achieved similar results with test manufacturer(14).

Beck Depression Inventory was introduced in 1961 by Beck et al. It consists of 21 items that are scored from zero (healthy condition) to 3 (severe symptoms of deep depression). Retest coefficients of 0.81 (within a week) and the validity was confirmed by psychology experts (15).

Data Analysis

Gathered data were entered SPSS software version 16. To assess the relation between mindfulness and depression Spearman Relation Method was used. The significance level was considered $0 < 0.05$.

Results

The average age of participants was 38 ($4.3 \pm$). In experimental group about 5 individuals had an Associate's degree, 9 had a Bachelor's degree and one had a Master's Degree. In the control group 3 individuals had an Associate's degree, 10 had a Bachelor's degree and 2 had a Master's Degree. The two groups were compared in terms of education level by chi-square test and there was no significant difference between the two groups ($X^2=0.88$, $P>0.05$). The homogeneity of the average age of two groups by independent

samples T test indicated lack of difference between them ($t=21$, $P>0.05$) (Table 2).

Table 1: Average dimensions of individual-social adaptability of groups in the two measurement periods

Group	Dimensions of adaptability	Pre-exam		Post-test	
		Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation
Experimental	Social	10.8	7.28	5.33	3.43
	Home	9.13	5.02	4.20	2.51
	Health	9.46	5.30	4.40	2.82
	Job	12.73	5.53	6.00	3.13
	Emotional	12.26	5.18	4.80	2.07
Control	Social	12.46	5.52	12.06	5.57
	Home	9.80	4.90	9.60	4.95
	Health	8.73	5.04	8.70	5.14
	Job	13.73	5.45	14.20	5.58
	Emotional	12.80	7.13	12.66	6.55

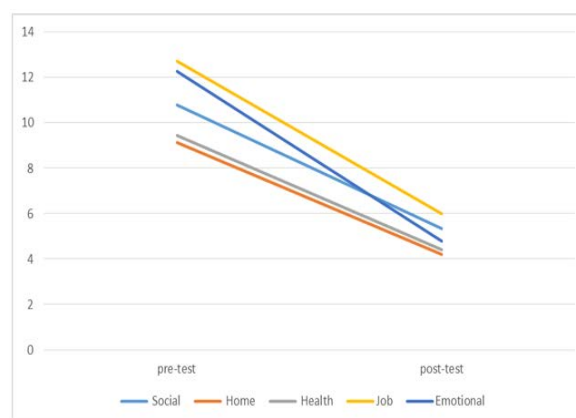


Figure 1: The average dimensions of individual-social adaptability in the experimental group by the two measurement periods

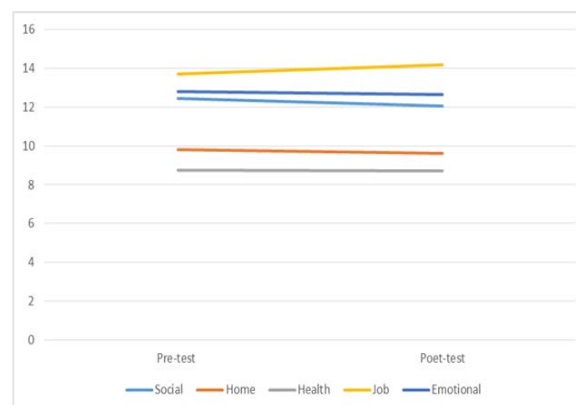


Figure 2: The average dimensions of individual-social adaptability in the control group by the two measurement periods

Table 2: Average depression scores of groups in the two measurement periods

Group	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation
Test	9.20	4.37	6.26	2.37
Control	9.26	3.57	9.06	2.96

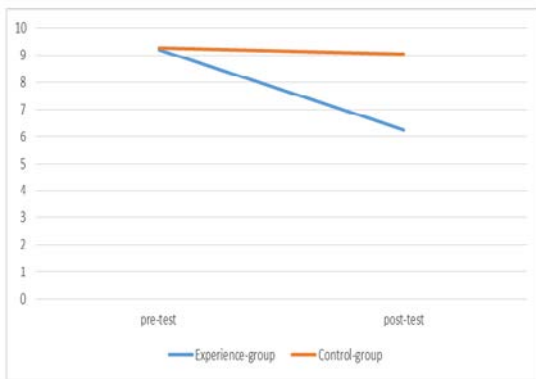


Figure 3: Average depression scores of groups in the two measurement periods

In (Figure 3), it is shown that the depression scores of two groups in pretest are high. In the post-test, the depression scores of the experimental group has significantly decreased after the intervention but the control group stayed the same.

ANCOVA results demonstrate that after controlling meaningful effect of depression pretest on post test scores, meaningful difference was seen between two groups. This difference demonstrates the effectiveness of intervention among the participants in intervention group (0.38).

Discussion

The overall goal of this study was to determine the effectiveness of mindfulness training workshop on individual-social adjustment and depression of employed women in health care network. The results showed that mindfulness training has led to an improvement of individual-social compatibility and depression in employed women.

The improvement of individual-social compatibility in this study by mindfulness-based life skills training is in line with the results of Hard castle and co-workers that by teaching life skills to the sample study the balance and management stress, time management, setting goals, self-confidence and control, information overload and information repetition. The results showed that life skills training program can improve the studied variables [14, 15]. Also the researches of Naderi et al. to investigate the effects of stress management training program as one of the components of life skills to enhance quality of life and two aspects of social communication and environment perception among working women, demonstrated the effectiveness of stress management training on the quality of working women's life.

In general, based on results, successful people with problem solving abilities and skills to cope with stress, have better quality of life and social communication and perception of living conditions [16].

Improvement of depression in the experimental group in present study is consistent with results of Yun-ling Chen et al. that was done to reduce the symptoms of depression with the title of life compatibility skill training for people suffering from depression, with the goal of life skills training and skills of life compatibility in depressed people. Quality of Life Questionnaire, assess your job, social support questionnaire, Beck Anxiety Inventory and Beck Depression Inventory and the Beck Suicide Scale was used to assess the pre-test and post-test scores and the results showed that the intervention group had lower scores in anxiety and suicidal after intervention and is dropped in relation to the pretest scores. Life skills program

with a focus on job adjustment and coping skills improved anxiety and suicidal thoughts in depressed women [17]. Also the study of Arch et al. revealed that participants who had 15 minutes of centralized breathing (one of the practices of mindfulness) reported less negative emotion compared to those who didn't have this type of breathing [18]. In other study such as Ong et al, indicates that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy significantly led to the enhancement of mental clarity, mental health and reduction of physical stress [19-21]. According to the third wave of cognitive therapy, the human mind does negative interpretation of the events that are happening and causes negative reaction and lasting negative impressions. In people who are susceptible to depression the mind is constantly focused on negative and painful thoughts which leads to more persistent depression. With mindfulness exercises, individual dispenses judgment about inner experiences (thoughts, emotions, physical feelings and memories, etc.) and this will decrease defensiveness against these experiences and instead of controlling them, it accepts the inner experience. Also Yu L et al. in their study revealed that work-related, and fear-avoidance opinions, can be considerably reduced by physical-cognitive-mindfulness education in female technicians with chronic pain.

Limitations

The present study has been conducted in small population; thus it is recommended to other researchers to assess such a relation in other populations with different size.

Conclusion

Mindfulness is being aware of thoughts, behavior, emotions and feelings and is a special form of attention where two basic components of presence in the present, and not judging the events and actions and reactions, play key role. In other words, Mindfulness is Being attentive and one hundred percent awake and being aware of all the events that are happening here and now around people as well as inside the body, along with not judging the right or wrong of internal evolution. Although really our judgment is that the effectiveness of the mindfulness training as other quasi-experimental design, has some threat of validity such as testing and maturation that mindfulness training for the woman alone might straighten out of these effects.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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