



Letter to the Editor

The effectiveness of chair work intervention on anxiety and depression in divorced women using Cannabis



1. Introduction

Cannabis is a chemical substance with scientific name of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) as effective constituent of this substance that is one of natural hallucinogenic substances. (Delile, 2005). This substance is the most used psychoactive substance all around the world as well as in Iran (Radwan et al., 2015). Divorce is a critical stressor event in life and divorced women are high risk for depression and anxiety (Ghasemian et al., 2014). Due to negative psychological consequences of divorce, psychological interventions seems necessary in this vulnerable group (Ghahari et al., 2017).

“Chair work” refers to a collection of experiential interventions which utilize chairs and their relative positions for therapeutic purposes (Pugh, 2017). The use of chairs in therapeutic dialogue, or “chair work,” is a powerful, effective, and creative intervention for psychological change and transformation (Kellogg, 2004). Chair work, which originally developed as technique used in psychodrama (Fowler, 1992), and developed further popularity within gestalt therapy (Kellogg, 2015). During empty-chair exercises, the client engages in a dialogue with an imagined ‘other’ (past, present or symbolic) which is placed in an empty chair. In two chair exercises, the client moves back and forth between two or more chairs representing different perspectives or parts of the self. In chair work role plays, particular interactions are imagined, re-created or rehearsed by the client and the therapist. Accordingly, chair work may be used to facilitate dialogues between aspects of the self (‘internal’ dialogues) or with specific individuals (‘external’ dialogues) (Greenberg and Dompierre, 1981).

Research suggests that Chair work is an effective intervention both as an ingredient of psychotherapy (Greenberg and Higgins, 1980). And as a standalone intervention (Rabinson et al., 2014). Such techniques have been applied to the treatment of anxiety and depression (Kellogg, 2012), substance misuse (Kellogg, 2015), and unresolved grief (Paivo and Greenberg, 1995). In regard to significant of chair work as a new intervention, this current study aimed to study the effectiveness of Chair work intervention on depression and anxiety in divorced women using cannabis

2. Method

The current study aimed at determining effectiveness of Chair work intervention on depression and anxiety in divorced women using Cannabis. 28 depressed and anxious women who reported use Cannabis for 5 years, selected randomly into two groups (14-member experimental and control groups). Experimental group trained Chair work intervention individually with in 12 sessions and control group members were in waiting list. Both groups filled out Beck's Depression (BDI-II) and Beck's Anxiety Inventory (BAI) in baseline and after intervention. All of scales have Iranian version validation (Kaviani and Musavi, 2008).

2.1. Interventional package

The intervention protocol was derived from Study of Kellogg (Kellogg, 2004, 2015). Dr. Kellogg recommended you to ask patient to sit in front of an empty chair and talk to the substance he or she is addicted to asking it why it lives with him or her? When they became familiar; what is the aim in this relationship? Why it is attractive? Does the substance know that is harmful for him or her? This conversation should be continued until the patient says goodbye to the addiction sitting on the empty chair saying it that it is the time for goodbye since your addiction as a bad friend for harms (Kellogg, 2004).

Another conversation can be with ex-husband to solve the issue since anger and excuse of divorced women may create negative emotion in them leading them toward addiction. In this case, the patient is asked to sit in front of the empty chair and talk with ex-husband sharing her feelings with him. Expression of anger and resentment makes the patient to forgive her husband and finish her unfinished work (Kellogg, 2015). Kellogg recommended you have some sessions for internal dialogue in patients.

3. Results

The results of adjusted mean value and results of Covariance for dependent variables are presented in Table 1 and show effectiveness of independent variable in the dependent variables.

The variables could be calculated by Wilk's Lambda formula. Eta-squared value that is related to hybrid variables of Wilk's Lambda test is significant, meaning that a significant difference is found between two groups. Therefore, the hypothesis, indicating that chair work intervention is effective in reducing anxiety and depression in divorced women cannabis users, is verified.

4. Discussion

The results of current study showed that Chair work intervention could reduce anxiety and depression in divorced women using Cannabis. This finding is in line with several studies that indicating effect of Chair work intervention on reducing anxiety and depression (Robinson et al., 2014), substance abuse (Kellogg, 2012), and unresolved grief (Greenberg and Higgins, 1980, Kellogg, 2004). These studies showed the efficacy Chair work intervention on psychiatric problems special substance use disorders.

Several studies that are in line with our study showed Chair work intervention as an emotional technique could reduce dependency to substances and improve psychiatric disorders, quality of life and emotion regulation in addicted patients (Pugh, 2017, Kellogg, 2004, 2015).

Table 1
Multivariate co-variance analysis for hybrid variable.

Source	value	F (25.2)	Significance	level Eta
Hybrid Variable (group)	0.60	19.48	0.00	0.40

It could be explained about this finding that negative emotions are target in chair work intervention because these suppressed negative emotions are critical for vulnerability persons to destructive behaviors such as substance use. Studies have shown that chair work not only is effective in treating addiction but also could resolve unfinished business caused by critical life events like divorce (Greenberg and Higgins, 1980; Kellogg, 2004).

5. Conclusion

It is stated that suppression of annoyance and anger in interpersonal relationships is like an open file that creates an unfinished business causing negative emotions. Divorce is one of these incidents. Many of people may abuse drugs in order to forget painful emotions caused by suppressed feelings in marital relationships so chair work provides an opportunity to solve this issue.

Limitation and suggestion

Studied participants were women only and there was not any follow-up after therapy; it is suggested to new study in future.

Ethical issue

As standard written approval of Ethics committee has been collected and preserved by the authors. Also, patient's written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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