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Efficacy of Mentalization-Based Treatment on the Self-Conscious Affect and Quality of Life among Mothers of Children with Intellectual Developmental Disorder

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Extended Abstract

Aim

The family functions as a dynamic unit comprising individuals with a unique sense of belonging and identity, aimed at fostering a secure environment. This system provides emotional, economic, and social support to its members. Parenting a child with an intellectual disability entails more significant stress compared to raising a neurotypical child, given the enduring commitment required (Kumari & Kiran, 2020). This challenge within the family particularly affects mothers, rendering them more vulnerable to mental health issues due to limited time to attend to their own needs and desires (Arya et al., 2019). The presence of a child with an intellectual developmental disorder in the family often leads to tensions, especially among parents, as indicated by research findings comparing parents of such children to those of neurotypical children (Baker et al., 2020). These parents require more time for the care and education of their child, resulting in diminished opportunities for personal activities and social engagement, thereby decreasing their overall quality of life (Villavicencio & López-Larrosa, 2020). Various therapeutic and educational approaches have been employed to address the psychological, cognitive, emotional, social, and familial challenges faced by mothers of children with intellectual developmental disorders. One such effective treatment method is mentalization-based treatment, as evidenced by its effectiveness (Steinmair et al., 2021; Malberg, 2021; Hajmohammadhoseani et al., 2021). In light of the necessity for research in this area, it is evident that mothers, due to their traditional caregiving roles, bear additional responsibilities toward their children with intellectual disabilities, resulting in heightened pressures and psychological distress. The presence of a child with a mental developmental disorder often inflicts significant psychological and emotional harm on family members, sometimes compromising the family's mental well-being. Mothers of children with mental retardation tend to experience more adverse effects compared to fathers. The excessive involvement of mothers in caring for a child with intellectual developmental disorder may lead to feelings of neglect, heightened responsibility, and subsequent emotional distress, including anger, guilt, and depression. Consequently, effective psychological interventions are imperative for this demographic.

Methodology

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with pretest and posttest control groups, including a two-month follow-up period. The statistical population comprised mothers of children with intellectual developmental disorders in Ardebil during the spring and summer of 2021. Thirty-seven mothers were selected via purposive sampling and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The experimental group received eight sessions of mentalization-based treatment over two months. The Self-Conscious Affect Questionnaire (SCAQ) and the Quality of Life Questionnaire (FQLQ) were utilized. Data analysis was conducted using mixed variance analysis with SPSS-25 software.

Findings

The results demonstrated a significant effect of mentalization-based treatment on positive self-conscious affect ($F=42.86$; $\eta^2=0.55$; $P=0001$), negative self-conscious affect ($F=51.84$; $\eta^2=0.59$; $P=0001$), and quality of life ($F=33.93$; $\eta^2=0.49$; $P=0001$) among mothers of children with intellectual developmental disorders.

Conclusion

Given the efficacy of mentalization-based treatment in enhancing self-conscious emotion and quality of life among mothers of children with intellectual developmental disorders, it is recommended to utilize this approach to improve mothers' cognitive and psychological well-being. This treatment, incorporating thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and mindfulness, has demonstrated effectiveness in addressing the psychological aspects of mothers caring for children with mental developmental disorders. Furthermore, it is advisable to introduce mentalization-based treatment to professionals in the field of female education, enabling them to conduct workshops focused on improving the psychological and emotional states of mothers with children experiencing developmental disorders.

Keywords: Intellectual Developmental Disorder, Mentalization Based Treatment, Quality of Life, Self-Conscious Affect.

Research Ethics Considerations

Observing ethical principles, utilizing data solely for research purposes, ensuring the participants' freedom and full discretion to withdraw from further participation in the research, and providing accurate information upon the participants' request, accompanied by group education certificates after completing the experimental group's treatment, were among the ethical principles maintained. It is worth mentioning that this thesis is registered at the Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz Branch, under the ID IR.IAU.AHVAZ.RES.1400.074.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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