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Efficacy Quality of Life Therapy on the Perceived Stress and Psychological Capital in the Female Caregivers of the Elderly in the Town of Ardestan

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Extended Abstract

Aim

The growth of the elderly population and the need for their optimal care have increased the demand for care and rehabilitation services. A segment of the elderly requires special care and rehabilitation services. The lack of a suitable care system and sufficient knowledge to meet the needs of this group at home has led them to seek assistance from non-governmental, round-the-clock rehabilitation care centers. Therefore, finding solutions to improve the quality of life of this target group and increase their satisfaction is crucial in our country. Caring for the elderly within the family context is particularly important (Yang et al., 2021). However, caring for the elderly can cause psychological and emotional harm to caregivers (Lu et al., 2015). As the physical and psychological problems of the elderly increase and the care process extends, caregivers often experience fatigue, burnout, and psychological confusion (Vallet et al., 2019). The debilitating nature of old age increases the elderly's dependence on caregivers, resulting in higher care burdens and elevated levels of stress, fatigue, anger, and frustration among caregivers (Akgun-Citak et al., 2020). Caregivers often feel a lack of control over their lives and view caregiving as a stressful experience, accompanied by a sense of incompetence (Rezende et al., 2017). This study investigates the efficacy of quality-of-life therapy on perceived stress and psychological capital among female caregivers of the elderly in Ardestan.

Methodology

The research employed a quasi-experimental design with pretest, posttest, and control groups. The statistical population comprised female caregivers of the elderly in Ardestan during the first six months of 2020. Thirty female caregivers were selected through convenience sampling and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups (each consisting of 15 women). The experimental group received eight seventy-five-minute sessions of quality of life therapy over two months. Pretests were administered before the intervention, and posttests followed. The applied questionnaires included the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen et al., 1983) and the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) (Luthans, Avolio, 2007 Cited by Narimani et al., 2014). Data were analyzed using covariance analysis via SPSS23 software.

Findings

The results indicated that quality of life therapy had a significant effect on perceived stress ($F=41.31$; $\eta^2=0.50$; $P<0.001$) and psychological capital ($F=46.91$; $\eta^2=0.55$; $P<0.001$) among female caregivers of the elderly. The therapy reduced the average perceived stress scores in the experimental group in the post-test phase and increased the average scores of psychological capitals.

Conclusion

The findings suggest that quality of life therapy is an effective method for decreasing perceived stress and improving psychological capital among female caregivers of the elderly. This therapy works by

training family members in communication, support, acceptance, and the replacement of irrational thoughts with rational ones. Additionally, the therapy's focus on community and family interactions plays a crucial role in improving the psychological and emotional state of caregivers. By expanding their circle of family interactions and learning more effective communication skills, female caregivers can perceive less stress.

Keywords: Female Caregivers of the Elderly, Perceived Stress, Psychological Capital, Quality of Life Therapy.

Ethical Considerations

To adhere to ethical standards, informed consent was obtained from the female caregivers of the elderly to participate in the intervention program, and all stages of the intervention were communicated to them. The control group was assured that they would receive the interventions upon completing the research if they wished. Both groups were assured that their information would remain confidential, and no names were requested. To motivate participants in the present study, the therapeutic and educational aspects of the interventions were explained before the intervention, and the entire intervention process was provided free of charge. It is noteworthy that this study was registered with the ethics code IR.IAU.KHUISF.REC.1400.278 at Islamic Azad University, Isfahan Branch.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have reported no conflicts of interest in this study.

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