The Effect of Group Sexual Counseling Based on Cognitive Behavioural Approach on Sexual Satisfaction of Women

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Sexual satisfaction is an important factor in the prevention of sexual dysfunction in women. It is an important factor in the healthy emotional and physiological aspects of sexual relationship.

Aim: The aim of this study was to assess the effect of sexual counselling by cognitive behavioural approach on sexual satisfaction of women.

Materials and Methods: This randomised clinical trial was conducted in two groups with pre-test and post-test on 198 women referred to selected health centres of Hamadan, 2016. The centres were randomised and taken as experimental and control group, three centres were selected as a control group and three as experimental group. The participants were selected by simple random sampling. The intervention group received four sessions (two hours) of group sexual counselling. Before and after the intervention, the demographic and sexual satisfaction questionnaires were completed.

Results: After intervention, there were significant difference between two groups regarding sexual satisfaction (p<0.001). The mean score of the experimental group significantly decreased (p<0.001) and the mean score of sexual dissatisfaction in the control group didn’t changed significantly (p=0.625).

Conclusion: The research findings showed that group sexual counselling based on CBT had an effect on the sexual satisfaction and increased women’s sexual satisfaction.

Keywords: Cognitive therapy, Iran, Sex counseling

INTRODUCTION

Sex is a requirement for every living being and mature creature, and its importance in a relationship is inevitable [1].

Now-a-days 60 percent of marriages failure is due to the lack of sexual satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction is not only physical pleasure but it also includes all feelings remaining after positive and negative aspects of sexual relationships [2]. Sprecher and Cate’s definition for sexual satisfaction is: the degree to which an individual is satisfied or happy with the sexual aspect of his or her relationship [3]. General sexual satisfaction is basically a subjective assessment of one’s sex life independent of sexual activity. Sexual satisfaction have significant relationship with variables such as frequency of orgasms experienced, the number of intercourse per week, duration of sex, age difference between spouses, duration of marriage, addiction, marital commitment, education and relationships such as supporting relationships, empathy and love [4-5].

Sexual satisfaction is an important factor in the prevention of sexual dysfunction in women and it is a multidimensional concept that includes emotional and physiological aspects of sexual relationship [6].

Sexual counselling can provide expert advice to create good information about sexual issues that is necessary for couples. Midwives due to their awareness of sexual health issues and constant contact with the community, can play an important role as family counsellors [7].

In contemporary clinical trials, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) is the most popular and the most applicable model of psychotherapy because of its effectiveness among different populations [8]. In CBT, individuals learn to fight with negative thoughts about sexual issues by using problem-solving ability. It is also a way to enhance and maintain good physical and psychological feelings between couples [9]. One of the main components of consultation with cognitive behavioural approach is providing sexual information related to sexual response cycle, anatomy and sexual techniques [8]. In CBT, the strengths of the behavioural therapy and cognitive therapy approaches, i.e., the objectivity, assessment and evaluation and the involvement of the role of memory in the reconstruction and interpreting the information, have been prepared [10, 11].

Based on previous studies, it seems that the level of sexual satisfaction and sexual knowledge in Iranian woman population is not desirable. The study conducted by Mofarah S et al., proved that marital counselling increased sexual satisfaction [2] but this research was not based on CBT method.

Researchers believe that couples unsatisfactory sexual relationships can cause feeling denial, frustration, unhappiness and might lead to the divorce of the couples [7].

The findings of a descriptive-correlation study, conducted by Shakerian A et al., showed that the individuals (Divorce asking women) with lower sexual satisfaction, have higher marital problems scores [12]. It seems that being aware of sexual issues avoids sexual disorders and helps individuals to deal with such problems. It can be expected that providing sexual counselling about such issues can decrease the women’s sexual problems. Although a limited number of studies have been conducted about the necessity of methodological counselling in sexual issues in Iran, the cause of conducting this study was to prove the necessity of using sexual satisfaction screening tests and cognitive behavioural counselling services for qualified women referring to health centres. One of the important differences of the present study with the previous studies is that, we used extensive training content in a different socio-cultural context and emphasis on reviewing all homework of CBT at every meeting. In this study, we used group counseling to provide an opportunity for participants to share their experiences, learn perspectives, and experience with new behaviours in a supportive environment. Also, the cognitive reconstruction helps them for getting information, ideas and skills. Despite the observed positive effect of CBT in the most previous studies, researchers do not refrain from exploring and explicitly working on sexual problems. Also, due to the socio-cultural differences and the different needs that are being created, studies of this kind are needed. Considering the importance of sexuality and its impact on the health of the family and society,