

The Effect of Self-Education Package Using Cognitive Behavioral Methods on Sexual Communication of Married Couples

Dr. Effat MerghatiKhoei¹, Rita Rahimi², Khadijeh Abolmaali³

¹Assistant Professor, Sexual Health Promotion, PhD Drug Treatment & Prevention Fellow, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC)
School of Public Health Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS)
^{2,3}Islamic Azad University of Roudehen Branch

ABSTRACT

The present research tries to investigate the influence of self-education package (using cognitive-behavioral method) on sexual communications of couples. 24 couples (48 people) were selected from among the clients of west Tehran and put randomly in the first experiment, control and second experiment groups. The first experiment group received the self-education package (with cognitive-behavioral method), for the second experiment group, the package content was taught in traditional method of lecture. A researcher-made questionnaire was used as data gathering tool in order to measure sexual communications which was conducted in a monitoring study on 30 people (15couples) similar to the main sample. It was tested by means of internal similarity method and Cronbach's alpha (0.738). Validity was also tested by experts. In order to analyze the obtained data, multi-variate covariance analysis (MANCOVA) was used. Results showed that the sexual self-education package had influence on the quality increase of couples sexual communications ($p<0.05$).

KEYWORDS: sexual self-education package, cognitive-behavioral, sexual communications

INTRODUCTION

Application of educational and medical techniques based on cognitive-behavioral approach like cognitive self-education and speaking with oneself facilitates learning sexual behaviors and changing wrong beliefs. Hart and Morgan believe that "all treatment approaches are categorized based on a spectrum of different cognition degrees or behavioral elements." Mac Guayer believes that "cognitive-behavioral approach is used to understand the complex dynamic communications between thoughts, feelings and behaviors" (Abolma'ali, 2010: 172). Sexual communications will not be complete experiences without learning skills and roles (Ruth, 2004). The issue of talking to one's spouse in the field of sexual communications is traced back to incorrect beliefs dictated in the past. This traditional approach considers man as active and woman as inactive (masters, Johnson, & Kolodny, 1995). Psychologists, psychotherapists and advisors believe that sexual communications of couples are subset of their marital communications, i.e., sexual communications influence on all communications of couples. In other words, sometimes, communication problems cause sexual problems and sometimes, sexual problems cause communication problems. Therefore, if couples have moderate communications in all aspects of their lives, they can have healthy sexual communications (Ruth, 2004). Improvement of couples's communications through improvement of sexual emotions is sought by therapists, because communication is a basic precondition to solve couples problems in a regular manner (Haoton; Salkovis; Kerk; Klark, 2009).

Couples communications will affect their evaluation of their sexual experiences and their sexual experiences will influence on their evaluation of communications. Their evaluation of sexual experiences will be positive if their temperament is positive and vice versa (Christie & Byers, 2001).

What does good communication mean and how good and bad communications can be distinguished? The above questions are usually answered with determination of marital satisfaction level and quality of communications and couples welfare(Crowe&Rilley, 2000). Emotion and trust are among the most important sexual communications. Honest communication is the key for friendship (Masters, et al., 1995; Ruth, 2004). Talking about sexual communications is usually difficult for couples. This forbidden area leads to communication weakness. Therefore, each of the couples have non-tested hypotheses about the other side's beliefs. Consequently, defective cycles are formed and sexual communications are repeated in a repetitive cycle and couples can not get rid of this defective cycle. This shows that sexual communications have influence on other aspects of marital life and each of them influence on each other (Crowe&Rilley, 2000).

Research background

From Masters and Johnson point of view, couples sexual problems are usually resulted from weak communications (masters and Johnson, 1970). Back and Johns (1973) showed that weak communications are the commonest problem in failed marriages. Artner's findings (1975) showed that there is relationship between

*Corresponding Author: Rita Rahimi, Islamic Azad University of Roudehen Branch
E-mail:RitaRahimi@yahoo.com

marital satisfaction and leisure time couples have together. Peterson (1979) found that in troublesome marriages, when one side tells something or did something, the other side does not talk about it but ignores it and this is the commonest model of behavior in unsuccessful couples. According to the studies of L.Robin (1976), unsuccessful couples talk about their problems when their problems are accumulated. Rendez, Lewinger and Melinger (1981) believe that couples who talk about their problems are more satisfied than couples who do not talk about their problems (sapington, 2000). In an investigation of the role of teaching communication skills in improving couples marital satisfaction that had sexual problems in a 80-people group, Yousefi and Adhamiyan showed that such a teaching is useful for such couples. Teaching communication skills improves family performance through influencing on marital and sexual satisfaction (Yousefi and Adhamiyan, 2007).

Keinzi's studies showed that high levels of teaching are related to improvement of attitudes towards sexual behaviors. Result of Kon Koller study showed that all couples must be educated systematically (Ruth, 2004).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study plan is of semi-experiment type and it uses pretest-posttest with a control group. A few of the clients of a clinic were selected and randomly put into first experiment group, control group and second experiment group. Statistical population in this study includes: all couples who referred to a clinic in west Tehran in 2009-2010.

Sampling method

Couples who referred to clinic were randomly put into three groups: first experiment, second experiment and control.

Research sample

Characteristics of sample members: age range of the members was 22-61 and education level was: below diploma, bachelor degree and higher, and all participants were married.

In experiment group, 8 couples (16 people) received the independent variable (self-education CD for cognitive-behavioral treatment).

Control group, included 8 couples (16 people) who did not receive any teaching.

The second experiment group included 8 couples (16 people) who received the content of the package in the form of traditional lecture.

Sample estimation

Sample group volume was estimated by Cohen table with effect size=0.50, test power=0.93 and $\alpha=0.05$ level: sample volume was 30 couples (60 people), but sample volume decreased to 24 couples (48 people).

Measurement tool

Researcher-made questionnaire was used to measure couples sexual communications and included 16 questions (titled: sexual communications questionnaire). This questionnaire was distributed among 30 people in an introductory sample and its Cronbach's alpha was 0.738. The validity of the questionnaire was investigated by means of experts' opinions. Experts evaluated the validity of the questions as satisfactory.

Questionnaire description: the above questionnaire has 16 questions. In this questionnaire, couples were asked to opine about sexual communications in a Likert scale from completely agree to completely disagree. One of these comments is as follows:

- My spouse and I have never talked about our sexual communications without embarrassment.
- The validity of the questionnaire was verified by experts' opinions and the reliability of the questionnaire is as follows:

Total reliability

Number of questions	Cronbach's alpha
16	0.738

Cronbach's alpha was equal to 0.738 for all questions (16 questions).

Execution method description:

First, sexual communications presented in the book titled "handbook of sexuality-related measures" authored by Davis et al (1998) was translated in order to measure target behaviors. In the second step, 30 people (15 couples) were selected after determination of research society in order to conduct a monitoring study (due to the presence of cultural loading in scales). They answered the questions of the questionnaire. In the third step, allocation of points to questions was done by means of Likert scale. SPSS software was used to estimate questions reliability and validity was verified by experts' opinions. Then, the questionnaires were distributed among participants. All participants (30 couples) were randomly put into 3 groups: first experiment, second

experiment and control group. The participants of this research were couples who referred to clinic in west Tehran.

First experiment group: 10 couples

Second experiment group=10 couples

Control group= 10 couples

Finally, the number of couples who participated in the 3 groups due to the reduction of members of the sample reduced to 8 couples.

First experiment group: after completion of the questionnaires (pretest), a sexual self-education package was given to the couples. Then, they were asked to watch the content of the package with their spouses in 3 weeks and review each part at least 3 times so that the information was embedded in their long-time memory. Furthermore, the couples were asked to carry out the assignments of each part. After three weeks, they were asked to fill out the questionnaires after 2 weeks for the second time (posttest).

Second experiment group, the members of the second experiment group participated in educational classes after the completion of the questionnaire (pretest) in 3 weeks, once a week and for 1.5 hours. In these classes, the contents of the CD were taught by traditional lecturing method by a researcher. Men did not participate in the classes due to some limitations but they were given teaching books so that this limitation was removed to some extent.

In the end of each session, the assignments related to the subject of that session was provided for couples.

After holding the last session of the class, members of the second experiment group were released for 2 weeks. Then, they filled out the questionnaires for the second time (posttest).

Control group: after filling the questionnaires (pre-test), the members of control group were released for two weeks. Then, they were asked to fill out the questionnaires again (posttest).

RESULTS

The main goal of this research was to recognize the influence of a sexual self-education package with cognitive-behavioral method on sexual communications of couples in 3 groups: first experiment group, second experiment group and control group. In this study, descriptive statistical methods like frequency, frequency percentage and central indices and scattering indices were calculated for each group and in order to describe variables and data. Multi-variate covariance analysis was used to analyze data because measurement scale was of distance type (MANCOVA).

Significance level was assumed to be alpha=0.05 for testing the hypotheses.

Table 1. Descriptive indices of respondents' points in the first experiment, second experiment and control groups in pretest and posttest of sexual communications

groups	variables	number	mean	Standard deviation	*k-s	p
Second experiment	pretest	16	37.93	51.6	652.0	789.0
	posttest	16	62.68	46.11	615.0	844.0
control	pretest	16	68.37	55.3	508.0	959.0
	posttest	16	87.56	29.9	965.0	310.0
experiment	pretest	16	50.39	63.5	726.0	668.0
	posttest	16	00.66	36.5	761.0	609.0

Kolmogorov-smirnov

According to the information summarized in the above table concerning the distribution of the points of participants in the three groups in pretest and posttest steps, different descriptive indices indicate that sample group points distribution is similar to normal distribution. Moreover, parametric tests can be used to test the hypotheses because the dependent variables are of distance type and data is quantitative.

Data analysis

Table 2. summary of variances equality test and Levin error

Significance level	Df2	Df1	F	variables
054.0	45	2	115.3	Posttest of sexual communications

Because p<0.05, therefore variances are equal. This is important because it verifies the reliability of the next results.

Table 3. summary of multi-variable tests

Eta squared	P	Degree of freedom for error	Degree of freedom	F	values	tests	effects
193.0	049.0	82	10	956.1*	652.0	Wilks Lambda	groups

Significant in 0.05 levels

According to the value of Wilks Lambda test (0.593) and the calculated F (1.956) has a degree of freedom 10 and 82, zero hypothesis is rejected ($p < 0.05$). in other words, mean of the participants' points in the tests is different among the members of the three groups of first experiment group, second experiment group and control group simultaneously. Effect size of difference is not that powerful but acceptable according to eta squared value (explanation coefficient of effect size) which is equal to 19% (0.193) and the individuals of the first, second and control groups can be separated based on the executed tests to some extent. In general, eta squared value (0.193) shows the relative influence between sexual teachings and the quality of sexual communications.

Table 4. summary of the effects tests among the respondents

Eta squared	p	F	MS	df 2	df 1	SS	Dependent variables	resources
156.0	022.0	153.4*	396.341	45	2	.792	Sexual communications posttest	groups

Significant in 0.05 level

According to the results of effects tests among respondents and the calculated indices (F ratio and their significance levels), it can be concluded that there is only a significant difference between the means of the points of the three groups in sexual communications component from among three variables.

Moreover, eta squared shows difference effect size and influence of sexual teaching on sexual communications(0.156) in this component.

Table 5: summary of Benferouni Tracking Tests

Experiment 2	control	Experiment 1	groups
<u>Sexual communications</u>			
31.3	12.9*	-	Experiment 1
-81.5	-	-	control
-	-	-	Experiment 2

Significant in 0.05 level

As it can be observed in table 5, results of Benferouni Tracking Tests show that the mean of the first experiment group points in the posttest of sexual communications component is greater than control group's ($p < 0.05$). This is while the mean of the first experiment group points (who did not receive self-education package) did not have any significant difference with the mean of the second experiment group. This shows that sexual teaching influences on the quality increase of sexual communications of experiment groups.

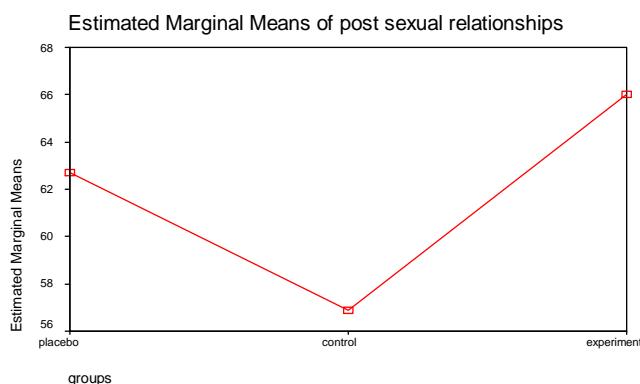


Figure 1: distribution of adjusted means of the participants of the three groups in sexual communications component

DISCUSSION

Considering the goal of the research, in this chapter we first discuss the results of the research and then the results have been compared with previous studies.

Hypothesis: "sexual self-education package influences on the couples sexual communications with a cognitive-behavioral method." The results of testing this hypothesis showed that this method is effective in changing the couples' sexual feelings.

The results of the present study showed that couples sexual communications is improved by this intervention. The common theoretical viewpoint is that communication is the precondition to solving couples problems in a structured way (Howton et al, 1989.2009). The quality of couples communications influences on the evaluation of their sexual experiences (Christie and Byers, 2001). The ability of couples to talk honestly about their sexual affairs is important in solving their problems. Therefore, improvement of couples' communication skills (for example selection of a suitable time for talking) plays an important role in solving couples problems. Moreover, Satin introduced communication as the core of treatment (Khamseh, 2009).

Results of this study match the results of studies conducted by (Masters and Johnson, 1970; Bec and Jones, 1973; Peterson, 1979; L. Robin, 1976; Jacobson, 1978; Wis, 1978; Alery and Terk Wits, 1978; Gottman, 1979; Rendz, Lewinger and Melinger, 1981; Crew, 1982; Davis, 1998; Yousefiyan, 2009. This means that concentration of teaching on proper interaction results in the correction of interactive system, improvement of effective communications and also concenytration of intervention on communication improvement results in individual correction in interactive system (Crowe & Riley, 2000).

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