

Comparing the Mental Health and Life Expectancy of the Addicted and Normal people

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present research was to compare the mental health and life expectancy of the addicted and normal people. The population under study includes the addicts referring to one of the Methadone Treatment Centers for drug addiction in the city of Ghorveh (Nikoo Salamat) and the normal people residing in the same city in the year 2013. The sample size of 100 people includes 50 addicts referring to one of the drug addiction clinics and 50 healthy and normal people residing in Ghorveh was selected through the simple random sampling. To collect data, a 28-question mental health (GHQ) questionnaire and the Snyder's Life Expectancy were used. To analyze the data, frequency, percentage, average and the t test were applied. The results indicated that there are differences in each of the four scales (Physical symptoms, anxiety, and the disorder in social performance and depression) as well as the life expectancy between the addicts and the normal people.

KEYWORDS: Addiction, Mental health, Life expectancy

INTRODUCTION

Addiction is a biological, psychological and social disease. Various factors are effective in the etiology of addiction that would in interaction with others lead to the beginning of drug abuse and then addiction. Effective factors on the person, environmental factors and social factors as underlying factors result in the process of prevention, diagnosis, and treatment to be planned purposefully (Islamdust, 2010). It's for many years that man, hoping to alleviate his sufferings and to change his conscious qualities has been consuming drugs differently (Davison & Neale, 2001). Today one of the personal, social and health problems that endanger human and national resources in different countries is addiction. Drug abuse, personally and socially leaves profound and deep impacts on the legal, social, environmental and financial arenas in the world. Besides millions of people, suffering from this crisis in the world, its impacts and consequences affect the lives of millions of others indirectly (Jenkinse, 2009). No such a phenomenon like addiction could be found in the world that has ever threatened the human life. Despite the risks and the menaces arising from addiction, the number of victims being involved in this crisis is on the rise and observing such horrifying scenes of addiction has not been a serious warning to the young people to avoiding it (Yoosefi and Khaledian, 2012). Drug abuse as a phenomenon is a universal issue that involves all countries and each of them deals with it, choosing guidelines to address it based on their cultural, economic and social infrastructures (Agha Bakhshi et al, 2009). The number of drug users in the world reaches 190 million while the same number in Iran stands at 2 million whose age average is 18 years (Momtazi, 2002). According to the 1998 statistics report, as many as 238000 hectares of the agricultural lands in the world were under the poppy cultivation and in the past year, 4000 tons of opium was produced. 27% of the lands under the poppy cultivation have been in Afghanistan while 58 % of the world narcotics have also been produced in the same country (Momtazi, 2002).

Some personality traits increase the risk of drug abuse; low self-esteem, lack of social and adaptive skills and crude methods to deal with the stresses of life are the dangerous characteristics of this kind (Jafari et al, 2009). Mental health is one of the important aspects of health. According to the World Health Organization definition, mental health includes the ability to establish harmonious relationship with others, improving personal and social environment and resolving conflicts and personal desires in a logical, fair and appropriate manner (Abbasi et al, 2001). The term mental health is a very broad concept and includes mental wellbeing, the sense of empowerment, adequacy, understanding of intergenerational solidarity and the ability to recognize the intellectual and emotional potential in a person, in such a way that the person can recognize his/her abilities and cope with the stresses of the routine life and be productive and efficient in terms of his/her job (Emam Hadi et al, 2006).

Vitality, joy, feeling of happiness is one of the divine gifts, bestowed on mankind in the light of well being and mental health; furthermore, mental health is one of the effective factors in promotion and development of people (Yoosefi et al, 2010). Most of the behavioral sciences scholars, believe that if individual have more accurate recognition of their own behaviors, they can better control them. In other word, sometimes studying

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unreasonable actions lead to their reasonability. Recognizing the causes of unsatisfactory, individual will be more satisfied. Based on this, much of our effort should be assigned to study and recognize our best and the worst behaviors (Navabinejad, 1993). However, health is the essential requirement to play social roles and man can act as if she/he be health (Asadzandi *et al.*, 2009). The hope theory raised by Snyder was a combinational theory based on purpose that was a one dimensional traditional and developed model, paving the way for the first time for the measurement of variables and the hope being reliable. It is believed that hope is not a passive feeling that only happens in dark moments of life; rather it is a cognitive process by which people follow their purposes. Hopeful adults enjoy a distinct mental profile (Snyder *et al.*, 2000). They in their own lives experience set backs in as much as others, but they have developed this belief that they can adapt to challenges and can get along with the adversities of life. They always adopt a continued, positive and internal talk, including expressions like "I can do it; I'm not going to give it up". When faced with obstacles in reaching their valuable goals, they experience negative emotions with a lesser extent. Presumably it is for this fact that when they face with failures, they create alternative courses to achieve their goals or choose more accessible goals with more suppleness. People having little hope, when faced with insurmountable obstacles, their emotions follow a rather predictable sequence of hope to anger, anger to despair and despair to apathy. People with higher levels of hopefulness, when faced with issues in the adulthood life; tend to narrow down great and important issues to small, clear and manageable issues (Snyder and Lopez 2007). It looks hopefulness is a necessity in all dimensions of life. Hope means as the ability to have a better feeling in the future. Hope with its influent force is in itself a motivating factor of the personal activity so that he acquires new experiences and newer forces are created in him (Darrodi, 2010). Results by Katibaei *et al.* (2010) titled as the comparison of the life quality, stress and the mental health among the addicts and non addicts infected with HIV and the healthy people showed that there is a significant difference between the mental health of the addicted and normal people. Results by Moallemi *et al.* (2010) in a research with the subject of comparing the spiritual intelligence and the mental health in the addicted and non addicted people indicated that there is a meaningful difference between the mental health and personality traits of the addicted and non addicted. Results by Parvizfard *et al.* (2000) suggested that among the drug users, depression, anxiety and dispositional disorders prevail. Results by Navidian *et al.* (2002) revealed that the feeling humility, despair, dependence and severe anxieties are common among the addicted people. In this research, a comparison among the addicted and non addicted people with respect to the mental health and life expectancy has been conducted in the city of Ghorveh in 2013 and recommendations based on the results of the research are provided to the dear practitioners and experts in order that they are aware of the mental health and life expectancy of the addicted and non addicted people.

This will help create a more appropriate and intelligent situation to be established so that some of the social crises are diminished and more proper opportunities are seized. It is hoped that the people are allowed to have a better life and more developed understanding of their own future.

METHODOLOGY

In the current paper the mental health and life expectancy of the addicted and normal people are going to be investigated based on the GHQ questionnaire and the Life Expectancy by Snyder.

General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) was designed in 1972 by Goldberg; This test contains 28 questions including four scales; physical complaints, anxiety, social performance, and depression (Goldberg *et al.*, 1978). The simple method of Likert (0-1-2-3) was used for scoring. The cut-off point for screening was considered 23 in this test. It means that the subjects, whose scores were less than 23, were not diagnosed as patients (Hemayattalab *et al.*, 2003). During the investigation of the four subscales: physical symptoms, anxiety and insomnia, social disorder performance and severe depression, if a subject's score based on each of the four scales is above 14, there is a problem in that scale (Dibajnia, 2002). Reliability of the questionnaire reported 81% in different researches (Seyedahmadi *et al.*, 2010).

Hopefulness inventory was made by Snyder *et al.* (1991), for assessing hopefulness has 12 expressions which are responded self-reportedly. From these expressions, 4 of them are specialized for assessment of factorial thought, 4 of them for the assessment of strategic thought and the last four assessments contrived to be deviant ones. Therefore, this inventory measures two subscales of factor and strategy. The average of admissibility and reliability coefficient of the device reported as 91%. The internal consistency of the whole test is from 74% to 84% and the reliability of the test-retest is 80%. But this percentage in the periods between 8 to 10 weeks is still higher than mentioned rate (Snyder and Lopez, 2006). In addition, there are lots of data about the simultaneous credit of the hopefulness inventory and the cases that it can predict. For example this inventory has a correlation of 50% to 60% with inventories of optimism, expectation of achieving your goal and self-esteem (Snyder, 2002). The population under study includes the addicts referring to one of the Methadone Treatment Centers for drug addiction in the city of Ghorveh (Nikoo Salamat) and the normal people residing in the same city in the year 2013. The sample size of 100 people includes 50 addicts referring to one of the drug addiction clinics and

50 healthy and normal people residing in Ghorveh was selected through the simple random sampling. To collect data, a 28 - question mental health (GHQ) questionnaire and the Snyder's Life Expectancy were used.

RESULTS

Table 1. Group differences to compare general health and life expectancy among the addicted and normal people

Variable	Normal		Addicted		Freedom degree	t	Sig.
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation			
Physical disorder	6.57	4.1	9.61	4.24	98	2.78	0.001
Anxiety	7.87	4.9	11.51	4.73	98	3.87	0.001
Social performance	6.92	4.7	11.71	5.13	98	4.88	0.001
Depression	8.81	5.2	12.8	4.77	98	3.99	0.001
Total	30.17	9.21	45.63	9.5	98	4.41	0.001
Life Expectancy	25.32	6.2	18.48	5.24	98	5.23	0.001

Results in table (1) showed that the average of addict people in all the questionnaire factors GHQ, i.e. physical complaints, anxiety, depression and social performance is in total higher than the normal people. This indicates that normal people enjoy better health and according to the cut-off point and scoring, the normal people in the depression and anxiety have a better mental health while addicts have problems in the scale of depression and do not enjoy a good general health. Results are also indicative of meaningful differences among the two groups of people with respect to all the scales. Also, the total scores of the addicted people suggest that they do not an appropriate general health. So it is concluded that there is a significant difference between the general health of the addicted and non addicted people. Also the results reveal that there is a meaningful difference between the life expectancy of the two groups of people with non addicts having more life expectancy.

DISCUSSION

Findings of the research showed that there is a significant difference between the addicted and non-addicted people with regards to all general health scales. In other words, addicts have lower general health and life expectancy. These results are in concert with those Katibaei et al (2010), Moallemi et al (2010), Parvizfard et al (2000), and Navidian et al (2002). To explain the findings, it can be said, that no drug abuse will promote the life expectancy and mental health among people. Also, if people find better stability, they feel they contribute more to the society by playing good roles and importantly they'll have an internal satisfaction. In this regard, in case a more appropriate and disciplined program is established in their lives, no feeling of vanity and idleness will ever grip them and all of this will contribute to their mental wellbeing and life expectancy. It seems that in today's world, the more people engaged in the fields of activity, vitality and mobility as well as safe efforts, the easier they will retain their own physical and psychological health and confront most of mental disorders and diseases (Yoosefi et al, 2010). When man uses no drug or, his body receives no drug, he is deprived in a sense and he shows a lack of mental health. A salient trait of this situation is aggression, impulsivity and interpersonal relationships become disrupted. Depression and anxiety are among main and known repercussions of drug abuse or dependence to it, rendering in the creation of a chain of disorders. It also can be said that normal people could function better in the milieu. These people are motivated by the self-actualization which is an internal need. To describe this point it can be said that since addicts are unable to meet their financial needs, struggling to find money they need, their general health and their life expectancy will be affected. Given the fact that drug use is on the rise, it is recommended that encompassing researches be performed nationwide as to the degree of the consumption of narcotics. It is also recommended that in order to make people be familiar with addiction and its side effects , training workshops be held by the practitioners . Hence, experts and those at the helm should do more to formulate a comprehensive plan to reduce drug abuse. Of other recommendations are prevention from return and treatment plans like: Confronting the supply of the drugs by the state, the important role of the mass media in increasing the peoples' understanding of addiction, the important role of parents in their interaction with each other's and their children, training people the skills and not training for just speaking, educating resistance against the peers and pressure groups. It is recommended that more researches with more samples, involving more people with different cultures be performed so that they can be generalized. Since this research was conducted in Kurdistan it is advised that such papers are conducted in other cities, provinces with various ethnic groups and cultures. Of the limitations of the research was the administration of the tests among the subjects where it was quite difficult to illicit clear responses and to draw acceptance due to legal and social problems with regards to the crisis of addiction. More importantly it was difficult to get them fill in the questionnaires that were followed by concealment. Of other limitations of the

research was that the paper was performed in Ghorveh and in generalizing the results, caution should be made. To sum up, the application of this research is that in case there is awareness, one can based on counseling methods reduce the extent to which one has problems respecting addiction, and decreases the threat of addiction occurrence that has been on the rise. This means that we in the counseling centers train people not to be caught in the negative propaganda of addiction blindly and the purpose is that drug abuse that hinders development and affects the materialization of goals be stopped. The paper is also useful for the family counselors, therapists, psychiatrists, and academics.

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