

**Research Article**

## **DETERMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAUGHTER YOGA THERAPY AND MENTAL HEALTH (CASE STUDY: JALALIAN LAUGHTER THERAPIES CLUB LOCATED IN FARJAM STREET)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Laughing has a valuable and special position place in psychology. It releases Cocktail hormones. These hormones reduce negative emotions of stress and tensions (Cortisol, Dopamine and growth hormones) and it also releases of Endorphin which bestows a person a sense of calm and mental balance. People who make laughing get more beneficial effect of laughter and they raise their tolerance threshold against anxiety more than a person who laughs. So, the aim of the study is to determine the relationship between laughter Yoga therapies and mental health in Jalalian laugh club in Farjam Street. The study is quasi-experimental, per- test, post-test with control group. With regard to the purpose of the study the researcher has used the questionnaires and Regression principle for data gathering. The study population of the project comprised 50 men and women who are spending a laughter therapy course in club. The questionnaires arescl-90, there is meaningful relationship between laughter Yoga therapy and mental health. The mean of mental health in pre-test and post-test indicates the effect of laughter therapy on increasing mental health ( $p=0.0001$ ). The laughter therapy courses have more effect on mental health due to meaningful difference of mental health before and after course, it is suggested that before marriage a course of laughter therapy should be held in order to increase mental health and to promote psychological welfare, these courses affect the spouses' mental health.

**Keywords:** *Laughter Yoga Therapy*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Most of the psychologists believe that laughter therapy is one of the effective treatments of behavioral disorders. Some studies show that this treatment has a positive effect on depressed patients. In the same way, the smile on people's lip induces a sense of calm and its effects on reducing the stress are so great. Early learning, strong memory, reasoning power is the other advantages of laughing. In contrast, gloomy mode damages the social relation and induces anxiety to audience (Shafiabadi, 2013).

People who laugh hardly are psychologically stressful, they should aware of advantages of laughing, they should sit around the table with their family and friends, recite funny events, see funny films,... the bad events are not as bad as we think. We can define the funny form of them by this optimism view. This optimize view help us to pass the hardship event and tolerate them

We should not let anxiety and stress conquers us (Shafiabadi, 2013). Sometimes the life events force us to react but the spatial and temporal conditions don't allow people to express their reactions so consequently a large amount of energy is trapped in our body which should be released by laughing. In fact as phenomena laughing is used to express our happiness and among the creature only human beings have this ability perfectly. Psychologists believe that life problems accumulate a lot of negative energy in our body this energy with internal stress have been discharged from body only by laughing. That is why after we laugh we feel calm and we have mental focus (Ghadiri, 2013). Laughing can have treatment effect on our soul and body. Norman kazins explains in his book "Disease Anatomy" that laughing has treatment value or in other word it acts like "bullet proof jacket" and protects us against destructive effects resulted from negative emotions therefore laughing stops fear of diseases it prevents tightening the blood vessels and harmful biochemical changes. Laughing increases production of endorphin. This hormone has very important role in decreasing the pain. Ancient Greek literature, this sentence is seen: A happy heart acts as a good doctor (Poladi Rishari, 2004).

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In two last decades many extensive researchers have been done proved that laughing has very positive effect on different parts of body (Koazivs, 1979). Laughing eradicates the negative effect of stress. Stress is considered the number one killer of human. More than 70% of diseases such as high blood pressure, heart problem, anxiety, depression, stomach ulcer, insomnia, allergies, asthma, tension headaches, menstrual disorder or even cancer relate to stress. The immense system has very important role in health maintenance and without doubt laughing reinforces the system (Kataria, 2011). Scientists conclude that laughing has both preventive and treatment value. It seems that nowadays people forget laughing. Dr Micheal Teater, a German psychologist, in his study expresses that in 1950s people on average laughed 18 minutes in a day averagely but although the quality of life has become better than past we laugh only 6 minutes in a day.

Children can laugh 300 to 400 times in a day but in adulthood, this amount reduces to 15 times in a day also our sense of humor is on decline because of strictness and seriousness. In past there were something which made us laughing from the bottom of our heart but the same things can only make us to have faint smile on our lips.

Each sessions of laughter therapy is combination of deep breath warm up exercises, Yoga stretching practice, revival of the spirit of playful childish. Group laughing practices are done exactly on the base of Yoga's principle in these exercises through the connection of body, soil and spirit, an economical balance has been created. Motivation trainings are associated with deep breathing which is the most important part of Yoga. Deep breathing activates Parasympathetic nervous system by movement of shutter curtain and abdominal muscle. It also increases the amount of pure Oxygen has the most important role in metabolism and laughing exercises increase the amount of pure oxygen (Katariya, 2011). During a pre-determined program the effect of laughing has been explained to whom are interested getting internal calmness. It is not first time that the scientists use "laughing" in mental and physical treatment. For the first Japanese have already discovered the miracle effect of laugh and they have used it for peace of mind. With this regard, it should be emphasis that most of us are spending our time at working environment where we experience the stressful time. The results of tolerating a great deal of stress are the appearance of diseases like high blood pressure, heart problems, insomnia, and depression. The stress of working environment may lead to wore conditions like addiction and unhealthy entertainments (Kataria, 2011). In the field of education, different researches have been done such as Foobar and Nicholas Cristakis, the professor of Harvard. They examined 4739 bonds of friendship during 20 years. They found that a happy person can enforce the happiness of his/ her close friends and family, wife/ husband, neighbors. Even this happy person can make happy people around one mile. A study carried out as titled "the effectiveness of laughter therapy on increasing the elder people's public health. The project has been done by Ali Behzadi (2009). The study was quasi- experience with pre- test and post- test and control group. The sample of the study was 60 elder people in Hasheminejad sanitarium. The sampling method was accidental with two groups of experience and control group. Findings showed that the laughter therapies have positive effects on the improvement of public health, the treatment of physical symptoms, sleep disorder, social functions, depression and stress. Another study has been done in 2009 in a high school in Tehran. Its title was the influence of laughter therapy promotion of social adjustment of third grade middle school girl students. According to the results of tables and graphs, the mean and standard deviation of pretest and posttest showed the tangible reduction of students' score in pretest so the null hypothesis has been proved. With regard to modern society needs of today's society to mental health these studied have been done. As mentioned above and with regard to cultural, social and economic differences between Iran and other countries, the main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between laughter Yoga therapy and mental health.

### **Analysis Method**

The present study is quasi-experiment, pretest, and posttest with control group. Which has been carried out sectional? It is a practical study. The study population of the project comprise of people who were interested in participating in laughter therapy course in Jalalian club in Farjm Street. The list of subjects is 100 people but because of unsuitable cooperation only 50 people have been surveyed.

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The data gathering tools are scl90 questionnaires. The questionnaires include 90 questions to evaluate the mental signs with which the differences between healthy and patients is distinguishable. The questionnaire has 9 dimensions such as complaints, obsessive- compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, and aggression and Paranoid thoughts.

The stability of these 9 dimensions is tested by use of retest. To calculate the internal stability and uniformity of the questions the alpha coefficient and regression have been used.

Despite the high volume and diversity of subjects, the return rate was almost 50%. To assets the variables like sexuality, age, grad the personal questionnaire has been used.

In this study, we used descriptive statistic (frequently distribution and frequently percentage) and inferential (Regression multivariable test). To analyze the data we used SPSS19 software.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

In this study 50 people have participated whom 38 of them (77%) were female, 12 people (23%) were male. 48% were between 26-33 years old.

With regard to their education, 10 people (20%) have diploma, 15 people (30%) have associated degree, 20 people (40%) have BA and 5 people (10%) have MA.

**Table 1: Describe Index of Mental Health in Subject**

|                      | Mean  | Median | SD   | Variance | Minimum | Maximum | Number |
|----------------------|-------|--------|------|----------|---------|---------|--------|
| Aggression           | 13/42 | 13.50  | 2.82 | 7.98     | 8       | 20      | 50     |
|                      | 8     | 8      | 2.98 | 8.93     | 1       | 15      | 50     |
| Anxiety              | 16.78 | 15/50  | 6.31 | 39.84    | 8       | 29      | 50     |
|                      | 9.18  | 9      | 2.73 | 7.94     | 5       | 16      | 50     |
| Obsessive            | 18.44 | 18     | 6    | 36       | 8       | 28      | 50     |
|                      | 9.32  | 9      | 2.66 | 7.12     | 4       | 17      | 50     |
| Personal Sensitivity | 15.96 | 15     | 4.62 | 21.38    | 8       | 28      | 50     |
|                      | 9.40  | 9.40   | 3.32 | 11.6     | 8       | 18      | 50     |
| Physical Complaint   | 18.78 | 18.78  | 6.12 | 37.52    | 4       | 30      | 50     |
|                      | 9.40  | 8.50   | 2.17 | 4.74     | 4       | 15      | 50     |
| Psychosis            | 18.42 | 18     | 5.67 | 32.16    | 5       | 29      | 50     |
|                      | 8.84  | 8      | 3.61 | 13.7     | 7       | 19      | 50     |
| Paranoid Thoughts    | 13.2  | 13     | 2.86 | 8.22     | 4       | 19      | 50     |
|                      | 5.88  | 6      | 2.54 | 6.47     | 8       | 10      | 50     |
| Depression           | 17.98 | 16     | 4.70 | 22.10    | 1       | 27      | 50     |
|                      | 6.94  | 6      | 2.40 | 5.77     | 2       | 15      | 50     |
| Fear                 | 12.50 | 12.50  | 2.78 | 7.76     | 8       | 19      | 50     |
|                      | 2.12  | 2      | 1.11 | 1.25.    | 1       | 5       | 50     |

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**Table 2: T Test Comparison the Mean of Pretest Posttest Mental Health Index**

| Aggression  | Mean  | SD   | T     | Meaningful Level | Number |
|-------------|-------|------|-------|------------------|--------|
| Anxiety     | 13.42 | 2.82 | .835  | 0/001            | 50     |
|             | 8     | 2.98 |       |                  |        |
| Obsessive   | 19.78 | 6.31 | 1/252 | 0/002            | 50     |
|             | 9.18  | 2.73 |       |                  |        |
| Personal    | 18.44 | 6    | 0/835 | 0/000            | 50     |
| Sensitivity | 9.32  | 2.66 |       |                  |        |
| Physical    | 18.44 | 4.62 | 0/451 | 0/001            | 50     |
| Complaint   | 15.96 | 3.33 |       |                  |        |
| Psychosis   | 9.40  | 6.12 |       |                  |        |
|             | 18.78 | 2.17 | 0/296 | 0/003            | 50     |
| Paranoid    | 8.84  | 5.67 | 0/115 | 0/001            |        |
| Thoughts    | 13.2  | 3.61 |       |                  | 50     |
| Depression  | 17.98 | 2.86 | 0/578 | 0/002            |        |
|             | 5.88  | 2.54 | 0/742 |                  |        |
| Fear        | 17.98 | 4.70 | 0/633 | 0/001            | 50     |
|             | 6.94  | 2.40 |       |                  |        |
|             | 12.50 | 2.78 |       |                  |        |
|             | 2.12  | 1.11 |       |                  |        |

On the base of t amount (directly), in the level of 0/000 it is meaningful. With regard to mental health, it can be said that there is meaningful differences between two sections pretest, posttest criterion. In fact the hypothesis has been confirmed. Considering the average amount of mental health in pretest and posttest we notice that the laughter therapy courses have increased the mental health of subjects.

## Discussion

Most of psychologists believe that laughing is the most influence factor in treating many behavioral disorders and even some studies show that laughter therapy is the most useful method in treating depression. Yet, the smile on people's lips induce the sense of calm, it is effective in reducing our daily stress. Early learning, Strong memory, reasoning power, and favorite social compatibility are the advantages of laughing. Typically, a face with beautiful smile is more attractive, from psychology perspective; In contrast gloomy people damage their social relations and induce stress to their audiences (Shafiabadi, 2011). People who laugh not very often are stressful and anxious. They should be aware of the advantages of laughing, they should sit together around a table and recite funny events, see funny films. Any bad situation is not as real as we see. We can change the bad event to their funny form and laugh them. By these ways we can overcome our stress (Shafiabadi, 2011).

In last two decades widespread researches have done about the positive effects of laughing on different parts of body in many countries. All of these studies prove that laughing remove the negative effect of stress which is the number one murderer for human being. Many diseases such as high blood pressure, heart problems, insomnia, anxiety, Algeria are the results of stress. It also has been proved that laughing with no doubt has the major role in enforcing the immune system of body (Kataria, 2011).

With regard to what was mentioned above, and due to social, cultural and economic differences between Iran and other countries, the researcher aims to investigate the influence of laughter therapy on mental health. Below the results have been mentioned:

With regard the amount of t,(29/84)(directly) in 0/000 it can be said that there is meaningful difference between two parts of pretest and posttest with regard to mental health criteria. In fact the hypothesis is confirmed. Due to the average mental health in pretest and posttest, we notice that the laughter therapy

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courses have influenced the mental health of people who have participated them. The results of the present study are in line with the following projects:

In the book: "the autopsy of a diseases from a patient's view" Norman Cazins, an American journalists writes about how laughing saved me from the deadly diseases like stiffness and inflammation of the Spain. That was why he chose this subject.

The studies of Dr Li, S, Berk show how laughing from the bottom of heart decrease the secretion of stress making hormones in body and increase the enforcement of immune system.

Jamezfoller, a professor of California university explains "our personal happiness develop behind people with whom we have close relation".

He says that the previous scientist knew that persons' behavior affect the others". If I smile the possibility that you smile too increases. We know that the waiters who smile more receive more tips".

Foller and Nicolas Cristakis have studied on bonds of friendships of 4739 people during 20 years from 1983 to 2003. They founded that the happiness of one person increases the other who have close relation to us like spouses, family, friends and neighbors but if a person is happy, the possibility of his friend happy feeling increases.

The researchers call this phenomena "cascade". For friend of a friend there is 10% possibility of more happy feeling and for this friend the chance of being happy increases 5/6%. In other words the happiness of one person develops from three intervals. Those who are at the center of these circles may be whom you never meet them but their mood has deep effect on you.

Blizenger, the professor of human development says "people who surrounded by few happy people will be more happy in future rather than who surrounded by unhappy people."

The history of laughing goes back to the appearance of human being and all knew from long time ago that laughing is useful for health but the scientific advantages of laughing discovered recently. Medical and scientific findings of advantages of laughing have been surveyed by many countries and they have been analyzed.

A study carried out about the effect of music therapy and laughter therapy on deceasing stress before surgery. The study was quasi- experimental with pretest- posttest with control group. First 325 women who applied for surgery have been chosen but only 130 people have participated in study. By using Cotel test, among 45 people only those whose scores were higher than 5 chose as anxiety then they were divided into three music therapy, laughter therapy and control group. For each group broadcast music and funny films three days before surgery then on the day of surgery the test was performed.

Findings showed that there is meaningful relationship between the mean of the anxiety before and involvement in music group. But there was a not meaningful difference between laughter and control group.

A study has been done under the title the effectiveness of Kataria's laughter therapy on elder health promotion in Hasheminejad sanitarian. The study was quasi-experiment. The samples were 30 elder men and women. The results of the study show that laughter therapy increases promotion and decrease stress.

A study has been done in order to investigate the capability of young girls by using of Kataria's laughter therapy the results of tables and graphs indicate that the index of mean and SD pretest and posttest indicate the laughter group have increased so the null hypothesis is confirmed.

### Results

With regard the above mentioned, it can be concluded that laughing has great advantages on body and soul so it can increases the quality of life Laughing release the pain and it is the enemy of stress. The present study can be considered as a starter the suitable way in other places. While there are limitation which the more important of them are the lack of similar researches in this field.

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