

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPORTIVE GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR DEPRESSION, ANXIETY AND STRESS IN WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER

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### ABSTRACT

The Cancer is a kind of life-threatening diseases and also breast cancer considered to be among the most common, the most lethal and emotional-psychological influential cancer among women. This study examined the impact of group supportive psychotherapy on depression, anxiety and stress in women with breast cancer. Therefore the quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test follow-up has been done for 3 months. So, among all women in Mahdiyeh medical diagnostic center in Hamedan, 30 women who had inclusion criteria selected and based on the assignment, 15 women (experimental and control) were replaced by dividing randomly into two groups. The experimental group received 12 sessions of the intervention for 90 minutes. The DASS was used as depression, anxiety and stress questionnaire, respectively. At the end, both groups re-evaluated in follow-up exam during 3 months. Data were analyzed by utilizing mixed methods and showed that the experimental group compared with the control group had fewer score in the post-test and follow-up stages, for depression, anxiety and stress. According to the results, the design and implementation of psychological intervention can help to improve and better adapt of the patient in addition to pharmacological interventions.

**Keywords:** Breast Cancer, Supportive Psychotherapy, Depression, Anxiety, Stress

### INTRODUCTION

In fact, fear of death, lack of awareness and fear of treatment and its side effects, the uncertainty of the return to health, a change in their body image which caused treatment methods, Possible problems family, emotional, economic, family, fertile ground for the emergence and intensification provide mental reactions such as stress, anxiety and depression in women with breast cancer (Qabrari *et al.*, 2006).

In this regard, studies suggest that the prevalence of mental disorders in women with breast cancer is higher than general population. For example, in one study by Ranjbar and Mostafavi (2005), prevalence of anxiety disorders was 9.25 percent in women with breast cancer and prevalence of depression was 5.39. The study of newly diagnosed with breast cancer in 1249 women indicated that 8 to 32 percent of them had suffered from stress (Hack and Degner, 2003). Expressed items noted the need to design and implement interventions and non farmac other apeutic strategies.

Poorafkari (2006) defines supportive psychotherapy: a form of psychotherapy used to help patients during the crisis caused by the socio physical illness also, it is applied to prevent mental illness and physical discomfort which caused by prolonged physical handicap. According to researcher's idea of present study, support group psychotherapy in practice is group meeting of sympathetic people in regular session. During this time, participates discussed about specific situations or problems where they have some

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problems, Problems and issues faced by their personal experience and the way to face and solve the problems.

About the background of the present study, in the study by Dolbeault *et al.*, (2008) Patient's participation in eight educational psycho group therapy sessions reduces anxiety and depression in these patients in compare to. Also, Wang and Wuand (2003) by using meta-analytic method 182 have found that the role of social support on mental health is a strong predictor of health. Tilver (2003) reported the effect of psychological intervention, after 8 weeks of training in improving mood and psychological functioning in patients with breast cancer that was positive.

Another study identified factors such as the promotion of information and support to increase awareness cause health improvement, reduce stress, and improve coping and adaptive behaviors inpatients (Wilkes *et al.*, 1999).

Thus, regarding the increased incidence of breast cancer and the importance of its impact in all aspects of life of people with the disease and considering that breast cancer patients treated with various psychological problems and also, with regard to the fact that in our society there are less researches and attention to the importance of emotional disorders in cancer patients; this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of supportive psychotherapy on depression, anxiety and stress in women with breast cancer.

### Research Design

Breast cancer patients in terms of severity of depression, anxiety and stress were assessed by using research instruments and among them 30 cases of depression, anxiety and stress were above mean and then they were alternative into control and experimental groups of 15 persons. Participants in control group exposed to, the standard care during treatment and experimental group in addition to standard care, exposed to research intervention.

In psychotherapy support groups, members were under intervention and education during 12 sessions of 90 to 120 minutes and two-time in a week. Also in this study, in order to observe ethical research, followed these guidelines: participants were voluntary with respect to the purpose of the study and informed consent.

### Explanation of demographic and anthropology information of samples

Sig	t	df	SD	Mean	Number	Age of testee
0.22	1.21	28	9.21	28.64	15	Supported group
			4.81	24.30	15	Control group
0.178	1.35	28	1.07	2.9	15	Supported group
			1.40	3.24	15	Control group
			bachelor	diploma		education
0.389	2.15	1	6	9	15	Supported group
			5	10	15	Control group

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**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

The table below shows the mean and standard deviation of depression, anxiety and stress at different stages of evaluation.

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviations cores for depression, anxiety and stress, and support groups for women with breast cancer in pre-test, post-test and follow-up**

Support group			Control group			Group and time
Follow-up	posttest	pretest	Follow-up	Post test	pretest	
7±5.85	9±5.4	22.57±9.09	17.66±6.36	15.73±7.12	19.2±9.22	depression
7±4.27	10.85±6.21	19.28±6.54	16.66±6.61	15.33±8.5	15.06±7.28	anxiety
8.28±4.63	11.71±6.96	26±7.35	15.46±18.73	18.53±6.16	19.6±8.32	stress

The above table shows that the mean scores significantly reduced for depression, anxiety and stress support group in the post-test and follow-up compared to pre-test. While these changes were very little in control group. In order to data analysis with respect to variations in the dependent variables (depression, anxiety and stress) and frequency in measurement time (pretest, posttest, and follow-up) mixed ANOVA test was used, therefore, in order to ensure compliance with the assumptions of the test (equal covariance of the dependent variables at all levels of the independent variable) box test was used and results suggest the existences compliance with the above assumption ( $P > 0.05$ ,  $F_{(45,2368,410)} = 0.853$ ). The next step was determined (according to the value of  $0.306 = \text{Lambda Wilks}$ ,  $0.001 > P$ ,  $f_{(6,22)} = 8.32$ ,  $\text{Coefficient-eta} = 0.69$ ), there is a significant difference between support and control )  $P > 0.05$ . composition varies linearly (depression, anxiety and stress) in interaction with time (pretest, posttest, and follow-up). Also, the results of Malki test are not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) and this means that the compliance in sphericity Malki assumption.

**Table 2: Interaction between group and time variables, depression, anxiety and stress in women with breast cancer**

Effectiveness	Meaningful level	F	Mean squares	DF	Interaction between group and time
0.215	0.011	7.413	739.39	1	Posttest with follow -up
0.362	0.001	15.319	1427.045	1	follow -up with pretest
0.213	0.012	7.302	574.50	1	Posttest with pretest
0.571	0.001	35.956	1396.233	1	follow -up with pretest
0.354	0.001	14.792	1265.382	1	Posttest with pretest
0.363	0.001	15/368	1335/616	1	follow -up with pretest

**Discussion and conclusions**

Data analysis by using a mixed ANOVA indicated that supportive psychotherapy on depression, anxiety and stress is effective in women with breast cancer, compared with control group. So the hypothesis is accepted. In fact, the obtained data indicate that the scores of depression, anxiety and stress in the intervention group at post-test and follow-up was significantly reduced in conducted assessment than in the control group.

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These findings are in line with some previous studies such as Dolbeault *et al.*, (2008), Taylor (2003), Waiting (2001), Wilks *et al.*, (1999), Mantovanya and Colleagues (1996) cited personal Sobhani (2000), Ardel (1996), Spiegel and Colleagues (1992), Kermani and Ranjbar (2007), Aminikhoo quoted (2007), Barabadi (2003), Havasi (2001) and Sobhanifard (2000), all of which reduce the impact of mood disorders and psychological support group including depression, anxiety and stress in women with cancer breasts.

In explaining these results it can be stated; meet similar people and assured source of relief for patients can force them to learn ways to overcome the ill and having more chances to get a life. When women with breast cancer communicate with each other, and have widespread sympathy for the problems and also discussed their experiences and supportive environment for the transfer of knowledge ,they will be hopeful about their future and feel that they are not just who suffering from cancer and many people are living with this disease normally. In fact, among patients, people who have experienced cancer are the most assurance references which are recommend. Although hearing the same things from other people do not seem to be useful so much (Talighani, 2004).

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