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**EFFECTIVENESS OF A REALITY THERAPY FOR IMPROVING
MARITAL SATISFACTION AND SEXUAL FUNCTION IN
INFERTILE WOMEN IN SANANDAJ CITY**

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ABSTRACT

Infertility is one of the complexities of marital life that leads to profound emotional and psychological pressures on couples. On the other hand, marital satisfaction is one of the important factors affecting the health of women and one of the most important indicators of life satisfaction that affects the level of mental health of couples. In this regard, this study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the theory of choice education on marital satisfaction and sexual function in infertile women. The research method is semi-experimental with a pretest-posttest design with a control group. The research population includes all women referred to the Sanandaj Infertility Center in 2014. The sample consisted of 20 infertile women who were randomly selected from among the participants in the research and were replaced in two Ttest and Control groups. The women in the Test group received 8 training sessions based on the theory of choice. Measurement tool was Enrique's Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire. The data were analyzed using SPSS software and ANOVA. There was a significant difference between the marital satisfaction scores of the Test and control groups at the post-test stage. In this sense, selection theory has a significant effect on marital satisfaction and sexual function ($p \leq 0/001$). According to the findings, selection-based interventions will increase the marital satisfaction and sexual function of couples, as these interventions will help to meet the fundamental needs of the personality from the perspective of selection theory. Therefore, this

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theory can be used to increase the marital satisfaction and sexual function of infertile couples and thus to promote a healthy and consistent life.

INTRODUCTION

Marital satisfaction is affected by many factors. Such factors include demographics, individual factors like attachment security or alcoholism, marital interactions like the husband's contribution to household labor or intimacy goal, sexual function, the spiritual and religious, mental health and also the influence of external stress(1,2,3).

According to these marital problems, conflicts have been known as a usual event in marital life (4,5,6).

Marriage, as the most important social form, has always been approved to meet the emotional and security needs of adults. This phenomenon is one of the most considerable events of every human being's life after birth (6,7) In spite of the fundamental importance of marriage and quality marital life in increasing the physical, psychological and social health, over the last few decades, in line with global change, in Iran, Average marriage age and the amount of divorce has sharply increased. The growth of the number of divorces in the country has been such that in 2012, at the country level, 100 marriages have ended in 18.1 divorces (8).

Individual and Social Damage of short-term and long divorce are well-known (9). In this regard, marital satisfaction is one of the most important determinants of family functioning. Marital satisfaction is a major contributor to the continuation of marital life, Therefore, the study of marital satisfaction and the factors that determine the duration of marital relationships Makes it worthwhile (10).

At present, different theories in the field of psychology are being developed to improve marital relationships. One of the most recent of these is William Glaser's Theory of Choice and Reality Therapeutic Approach(11). In this approach, emphasis, and acceptance of responsibility, reality, and recognition of the wrong and correct, and their relationship with the everyday life of the individual is considered. The focus of choice theory is to learn how to choose more effectively. People, instead of being victims of conditions beyond their control, assume responsibility for their lives (12 (13).

Toozandehjani et al (14) reported a positive effect of treatment reality on depression in infertile

women. Pourheidari et al (15) reported that life skills training is effective in improving the sexual and Marital satisfaction of young couples. Keshavarz et al (16), showed that group counseling with a problem-solving based on basic needs of selection theory was effective to improve couples' relationships. Glaser investigated the effects of "counseling through the theory of choice". The results of his research indicated that the conflict between the wishes of couples, the Unrealistic desires and the proper failure of their behavior, leads to marital conflict (17).

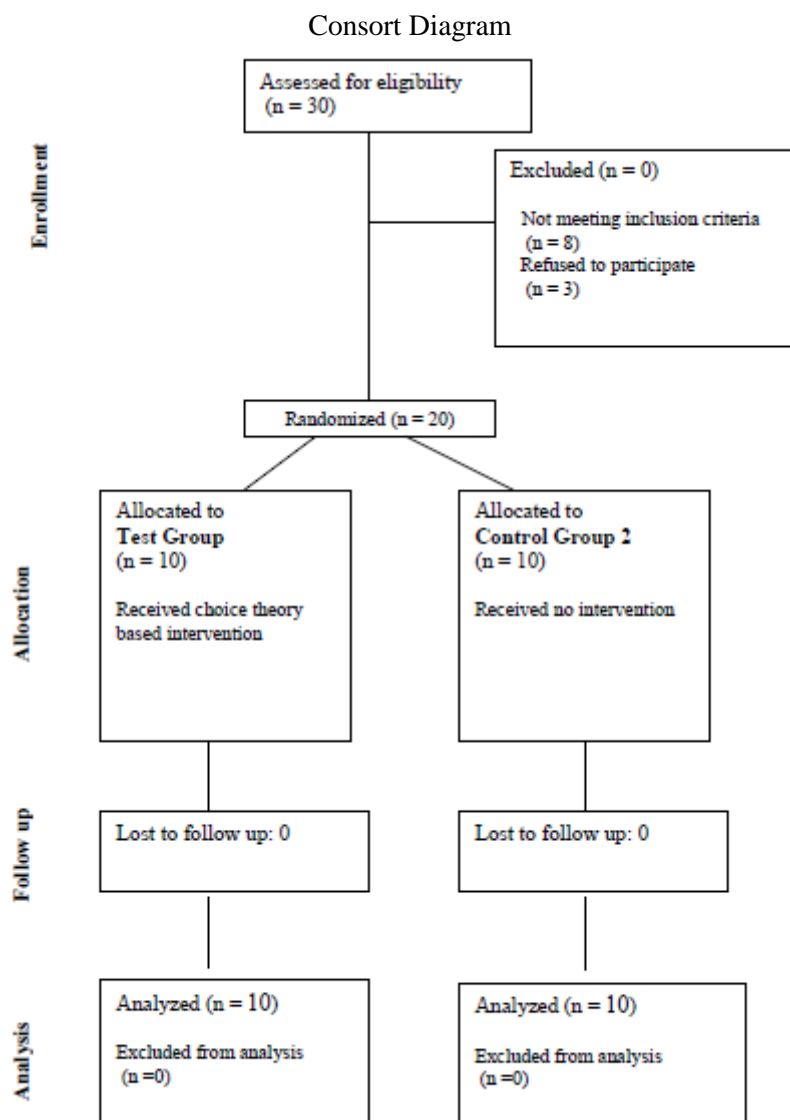
Considering the problems of infertility and its effect on marital dissatisfaction as one of the main reasons for divorce, on the one hand, and the importance of selection theory in the treatment of mental disorders, on the other hand, this study investigated the extent to which exposure to Choice Theory improved marital satisfaction in infertile women.

METHODS

The method of performing this research was a semi-experimental design and its pretest-posttest design was done using the control group. The sample population of this study included all infertile women who were referred to Sanandaj Infertility Center in 2014. 30 participants who had been trying to conceive over the past one to two years, were recruited for this study. Regarding the nature of the subject, research samples were selected voluntarily. They meet the inclusion criteria (having the cut scores at pre-test questionnaire, the age range of 20-45 years, awareness of the problem, not participating in any individual or group psychological treatment, not currently practicing any relaxation technique, not currently taking psychotropic medication, and not being clinically depressed). Based on inclusion criteria only 20 participants had to be recruited prior to proceeding. Selected couples were randomized, according to a computer-generated random-numbers table, into one of two groups: Test (10) and a control group (10).

The exclusion criteria were any underlying diseases (cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, mental illness, and/or not attending all intervention sessions. During the 2 months of the experiment, the participant commitment and impact of the intervention were followed up by reviewing the assignments given at each of the previous sessions [Consort Diagram].

This study was approved by the ethics review board at the Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences.



To collect information in this research, a three-part questionnaire was used. In the first part, it contained demographic information (including age, place of residence, educational level, duration of the marriage, occupation), and in the second part, for measuring marital satisfaction, the Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale Questionnaire was used. This questionnaire consists of 47 questions and 11 subscales of marital satisfaction (8 questions), personality issues (3 questions), marital relationship (4 questions), conflict resolution (4 questions), financial management (4 questions), leisure activities (3 questions), sexual relationship (4 questions), children and parenting (4 questions), family and friends (4 questions), egalitarian roles (4 questions) and religious orientation (2 questions), and the response rate of five Degree (I strongly disagree = 1, I strongly agree with = 5). In fact, the first three questions of this questionnaire are not used in calculating any of the subscales, so 44 questions are considered for these calculations. Validity and reliability of this questionnaire have been confirmed in Iran. Alpha range for women

between 0/88-0/95 have been reported (15). In the third part of research Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI) were used. This brief (19-item) self-report questionnaire assesses sexual functioning in women in six separate dimensions (desire, arousal, lubrication, orgasm, satisfaction, pain) (Rosen et al., 2000).

The choice theory and reality therapy training were performed on the Test group in 90-minute sessions for 8 weeks (Table 1), while the control group received no intervention. At the end of the day, both groups were evaluated with the post-test. After the eight weeks of group counseling, the Marital Conflicts and FSFI Questionnaires were performed between both the test and the control group. The covariance test was used to analyze the collected data of the research.

RESULTS

In this study, 20 infertile women have been selected and investigated. They categorized into the groups of Test and control. Both groups were

homogeneous in age and educational grade. The pre-test mean was 11.99 and 12.22 respectively for the Test and control group. The post-test mean for the Test group was considerably increased to 18.67 in comparison with the control group (11.99). The descriptive results of data demonstrate in Table 2. The descriptive Indices in Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference between means and SD of two groups ($p > 0.01$).

The results related to the covariance analysis of the effectiveness of reality therapy marital satisfaction of infertile women on post-test are presented in table 2. As shown in Table 2, the interaction between the groups and the pretest of marital satisfaction is not significant. In other words, the data support the homogeneity hypothesis of regression slopes ($F = 1.31, p \leq 0.76$).

The result of Table 3 shows that there is a considerable difference between the mean score of the Test and control group. So we can conclude that group choice theory and reality therapy training increase marital satisfaction ($F(16.1) = 22.21, p < 0.001$).

According to table 4, the results of sexual function's covariance analysis show that the average of sexual function for the test group was 9.9 and this amount for the control group was 0.6. The average status indicates that the sexual function in the test group is more than the average for the control group. Regarding $F=4.26$ and the significance level of 0.001, this status shows that the Reality Therapy group counseling was effective on increasing sexual function.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of group training of choice theory and reality therapy in Improving Marital Satisfaction in Infertile Women. The results of this study showed that training choice theory and reality therapy were caused to increase Marital Satisfaction. The results of this research corresponds to the findings of Soltan et al (19), Tadayon et al (4), Boromand et al (20) and Yahyae et al (21) reports which showed that Reality Therapy and group counseling based on the Choice Theory is effective on Marital Satisfaction and the rate of life's qualification and marital conflicts of addicted spouses. The results of this study are along the previous study results on the efficacy of group reality therapy on infertile women before IUI fertilization treatment Which reported a positive effect of therapeutic reality on reducing depression and improving their quality of life(14).

Rajamand et al reported that Reality Therapy approach improves Problem Solving Skills and Marital

Intimacy among Couples (22). Kardan-Souraki et al upon their literature review showed that Improving and promoting communication, problem-solving, self-disclosure and empathic response skills and sexual education can be taken to enhance marital intimacy and strengthen family bonds and stability (23). Glaser argues that the contradiction between the wishes of couples, the unreality of the desires and the proper failure of one's own behavior leads to marital conflict (17). In this perspective, the best way to treat is to change behavior through the selection of useful and voluntary acts. Change is through the selection of behaviors that improve the relationship between women and men because the change of behavior through an individual's choices is easier than changing feelings or cognition (17, 23).

There are some studies which aimed at investigating the effectiveness of reality therapy in decreasing the anxiety in infertile women. Their obtained data for state anxiety and trait anxiety of infertile women suggest that the intervention of reality therapy in decreasing the state and trait anxiety of infertile women has been effective. Therefore the results of this study are in harmony with the findings of Soltanzadeh Mezeji et al (24) Domar et al (25), Terzioglu et al (26), Newton et al (27), and Matthew et al (28) which are based on the fact that the psychology and reality therapy intervening factors decrease the anxiety of infertile women.

Infertility, as an emotional shock, is considered as a personal and social problem affecting couple's life. Overall, infertility, as a serious medical problem can expose couples to mental pressure and various psychological disorders and marital satisfaction (29,30, 31). Various factors are involved in marital satisfaction, including the demographic ones, intimacy, sexual function, marital conflict, and stress (2). Regarding the problems that infertile women have and according to the results of our study, which is consistent with the results of previous studies (15, 24,25,26,27), it can be concluded that the educational approach based on the use of the theory of choice can improve the marital satisfaction and sexual function of infertile women and ultimately increase their mental health.

Reality counseling helps spouses to better manage their lives because it helps individuals shift their negative behaviors and make positive choices which allow them to satisfy and fulfill their basic needs and achieve emotional and psychological stability. Reality counseling also addresses poor adjustment, including the poor marital adjustment based on poor behavior choices with others (11, 22,29). The foundation of the theory is

the reality that all who require therapy or counseling are suffering from one basic lack in life, the inability to fulfill basic needs, and that this inability stems from people's inability to accept the realities in which they live. Thus the therapy is successful when the individual ceases to deny reality and realizes that he is fulfilling his needs according to this reality (31,32).

Reality therapy which is firmly based on choice theory helps the infertile couples to better manage their lives and, by paying attention to their basic needs, as well as achieving a psychological and emotional stability, obtain more satisfaction with their marital life and accept the reality of their relationship and then by accepting reality in their lives, they can more easily try to get the advanced infertility treatments. From Glaser's point of view, the theory of choice is to accept the fact that all those who need treatment or counsel, actually suffer from the inability to meet one of their basic needs in life, which is due to the inability to accept the realities that these People live with it(32,33). Therefore, reality-based therapy is successful when individuals learn from the choice-based learning option to meet their reality-based needs, which can be generalized for infertile women too. Result of this study can be helpful for the subsequent comprehensive studies.

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