

Examining the Effect of Metacognitive Group Therapy on Anxiety among Caregivers of Hospitalized Patients with Schizophrenia

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Abstract

Introduction: Schizophrenia is a severe and disabling disorder which, along with its negative effects on patients, has numerous negative impacts on primary caregivers of these patients and can cause anxiety in them. Metacognitive therapy as one of the most effective therapies is used for treating a wide range of anxiety disorders. This study aimed to examine the effect of group metacognitive therapy on level of anxiety in caregivers of patients with schizophrenia.

Methods: This clinical trial was followed by a pretest-posttest design with a control group. Among all caregivers of patients with schizophrenia hospitalized at 22nd Bahman Hospital in Qazvin, 60 individuals were selected using a simple random sampling method. Finally, considering the inclusion criteria, 45 individuals were randomly selected and assigned to two experimental (23 individuals) and control (22 individuals) groups. Since three people from the experimental group abandoned the study, the number of participants placed in each group decreased to 20 people. With six-day intervals, the experimental group took part in ten 90-minute group metacognitive therapy sessions developed by Wells. However, during this time, no therapeutic interventions were conducted on the control group. Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory was used as an assessment tool in the pretest, posttest, and the two-month follow-up. Data were analyzed via SPSS 23 using descriptive statistics and mixed between-within subjects ANOVA (repeated measures analysis of variance).

Results: Results of the present study demonstrated that after conducting the metacognitive therapeutic intervention, a mean score of state-trait anxiety obtained by the experimental group significantly decreased compared to that of the control group ($P < 0.01$). These results indicated that metacognitive group therapy was effective on decreasing anxiety and in posttest and follow-up, compared to pretest, anxiety among the experimental group significantly decreased. In addition, no significant differences were found between a mean anxiety score obtained by the experimental group in the follow-up compared to that obtained in the posttest ($P > 0.05$), which showed the continuation of therapy effectiveness until the follow-up.

Conclusions: The caregivers of schizophrenic patients who underwent the metacognitive therapy obtained lower anxiety scores compared to the control group. Therefore, the results suggests that this therapy may lead to a decrease in anxiety among caregivers of patients with schizophrenia.

Keywords: Anxiety, Metacognitive Therapy, Schizophrenia, Caregivers