

Self-confidence in Patients with Opioid Dependence: Efficacy of Group Therapy Based on Life Skill and Problem Solving Training

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ABSTRACT: Since lack of self-confidence is identified as an important factor in opioid addiction, life skills training are crucial to create a sense of empowerment. In this study, the effect of life skills training and problem solving was investigated in increasing self-confidence in the addicts treated with buprenorphine. This is a semi-experimental study with pre-test – post-test and control group. The statistical study population included all addicts treated in Tehran Welfare Organization Addiction Clinics in spring 2013. In addition, 30 subjects were selected as sample size using random sampling method. The subjects were divided into two experimental and control groups. Eysenck confidence questionnaire was used for data collection. The experimental group received 8 sessions of life skills and problem solving training once a week. Confidence in the addicts who had received life skill training in the experimental group at posttest was significantly higher than the control group. According to study results, life skill training is effective in increasing self-confidence in the addicts. This training can be used as a supplement to treat addiction.

Keywords: Self-confidence, Life skills training, Problem-solving training, Addiction

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INTRODUCTION

Opioid addiction is one global disaster threatening public health nowadays. Addiction is defined as psychological dependence on a substance, which causes a drug-seeking behavior. Physical dependence on opiate leads to physical and mental health problems [1]. The increasing prevalence of drug abuse among adolescents and young individuals as well as harmful and destructive individual, familial, social, occupational, financial, ethical and cultural effects of chronic and poor prognosis necessitate identification of effective factors in both prevention and treatment of addiction [2]. Research on addiction has identified three factors related to drug abuse including poor self-esteem, inability to express feelings and lack of communicational skills. Furthermore, it was found out that there is a significant relationship between social isolation, poor self-efficacy, substance abuse and risky behaviors [3, 4]. On the other hand, research on drug abuse has shown that there is an inseparable relationship between feelings of inadequacy and lack of confidence with tendency to addiction [5]. In recent years, different approaches and techniques for treatment of substance abuse were proposed. Life skill training is considered as one important method proposed for drug abuse treatment. Through life skills training, the addict can also make a healthy and friendly relationship with peers and others and express himself in presence of others and satisfy sense of self-respect [6, 7]. Life skills are the abilities required for establishing proper and effective interpersonal relationships, taking on social responsibilities, making correct decisions, resolving conflicts without resorting to actions that harm themselves or others [8]. Latifi et al. [9] showed that life skill training has a significant effect on increasing self-esteem scores. Life skill training can promote mental health and increase self-esteem. Life skill training programs are positively effective in areas such as proper social interaction between peers, increasing peer support, reducing anger, anxiety, depression, shyness, delinquent behavior and increasing proper verbal and non-verbal skills [10]. Therefore, this program can promote individual social and mental health and enhance self-confidence. Several studies have shown that communicational skills training are effective in changing attitudes and increasing awareness of the

subjects about effects of substance abuse [11, 12]. Farmani et al. [10] also concluded life skill training is effective in treating substance abuse and non-relapse in the addicts. Life skill and problem solving training increases psychosocial capabilities in the addicts, so that they can cope with daily living demands and conflicts [13].

Addicted men disillusion and disappoint women in life. Therefore, it is essential to present methods for establishing relationships in order to increase satisfaction with partners. This leads to positive emotions in the addicts. A positive mood is an attitude known as self-confidence, which is probably the most important individual attitude. Self-confidence means being confident, courageous and not being shy in all situations. A confident individual is open to be challenged and can accept his mistakes and trust his abilities. Even when some kinds of his expectations are not met, he still keeps his positive attitude and accepts himself [14]. Increased self-confidence decreases psychological pressure a little bit and create a new world for the addict. In this study, it was attempted to answer the following question. Are life skill and problem solving training effective in increasing self-confidence in the addicts in recovery?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, quasi-experimental projects with pretest-posttest and control group were used. The statistical population included all addicted men who visited Tehran Welfare Addiction Clinics in spring 2013 voluntarily. They were treated with buprenorphine medication. Due to limitation of selecting this sample (due to uncooperative addicts, limited number of admission centers, controlling gender variable and type of substance), only 20 subjects were randomly selected who were divided into two control and experimental groups using random tailored method. The experimental group was given life skill training programs. The control group received no training. All subjects filled out Eysenck self-confidence questionnaire at pre-test and post-test. The collected data was analyzed using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The intervention was life skill training program given during 8 sessions in three months, each session lasted for 90 minutes. These programs included self-belief, saying no to incorrect requests, resolving misunderstandings and false perceptions and false beliefs, self-management skill or self-confidence, promoting decision-making and problem-solving abilities, establishing effective and helpful relationships with others, controlling anger, setting goals in life.

Eysenck Self-confidence Questionnaire: This questionnaire contains 30 items. High scores indicate high self-confidence while low scores indicate those individuals who do not accept themselves and believe that they have failed in their lives and they are not appealing. In other words, they have low self-confidence. Izadi Moghadam calculated reliability of the questionnaire through Cronbach's alpha as 0.83 (n=166). Then, this questionnaire was confirmed as a valid test. Score 1 was given to positive questions whose responses were yes while score zero was given to the questions whose responses were no. Those questions marked with a question mark by the respondents were give 0.5 score. The highest score was 30 [15].

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics of the variable under study (self-confidence) are given in the following table in both control and experimental groups. The table 1 shows that mean self-confidence in the experimental group increased substantially at post-test compared to pre-test. In the control group, the difference between self-confidence at post-test and pre-test was not significant. To evaluate the effectiveness of life skill training on individual self-confidence, analysis of covariance was used as follows. In the analysis of covariance, self-confidence at post-test was considered as the dependent variable while self-confidence at pre-test was considered as explanatory variable. Comparison between the groups was performed. As it is observed in the above table, significant difference was observed between control and experimental groups in self-confidence scores after taking into account the pre-

test modification (explanatory variable), (Eta square=0.291, $p < 0.05$, $F = 6.975$). In other words, the experimental group who received life skills training had higher self-confidence scores than control group who received no training.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the variables under study in both control and experimental groups

Variable	Group	Type of the test	Number	Minimum score	Maximum score	Mean	Standard deviation
Self-confidence	Control	Pretest	10	8	18	13.00	3.56
		posttest	10	10	22	15.10	3.54
	Experimental	Pretest	10	8	19	11.70	3.20
		Posttest	10	13	23	17.70	2.91

Table 2. Results of analysis of covariance to assess effectiveness of life skill training on self-confidence

Source	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of squares	F-statistics	Level of significance	Effect size
Constant value	118.67	1	118.67	15.758	0.001	0.481
Pre-test	60.97	1	60.97	8.096	0.011	0.323
Group	52.53	1	52.53	6.975	0.017	0.291
Error	128.03	17	7.53			
Total	5602.00	20				

DISCUSSION

The results showed that life skills training are effective in increasing self-confidence of the addicts in recovery. This confirms the results of other researches. Latifi et al. [9] in line with the present study showed that life skills training have a significant effect on increasing self-esteem scores. Life skills training promote mental health and increase self-esteem. Life skills training enhance individual experience, problem solving and effective communication with others in the addicts. These issues prevent negative behaviors, which increase self-confidence and reduce addiction. In several studies, it was shown that participation in life skill programs increases mental health, enhances self-confidence and self-respect, improves interpersonal communication and promotes healthy and social behaviors [11].

Group therapy helps people to express latent aspects of their inner selves (feelings, thoughts, attitudes and beliefs) about an issue or a set of relevant issues. They may review various aspects of an internal issue with help of the leader. In this method, social skills are taught to the subject and unhealthy relationships are modified. As a result, his self-esteem increases [16]. Life skills not only leads to desirable interpersonal relationships through proper verbal and non-verbal skills, but also increases peer support by eliminating individual shyness, anger, and delinquent behaviors and enables the individual to take on social responsibilities and make the right decisions in difficult situations. Thereby, he feels he is worthy and his confidence is strengthened [8, 10]. Therefore, considering the findings of this study, it is suggested that life skills training and problem solving programs be considered in prevention and treatment of substance abuse. Small interval between pretest and

posttest quarter, no follow up and the statistical population limited to self-referral addicts who visited Tehran Welfare Addiction Clinics were considered as limitations of the present study.

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