



## Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment therapy on Happiness in Iranian veterans with Mental Disorders in Psychiatric Hospitals

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### Abstract:

**Background and Objectives:** In this study, considering the existence of psychiatric veterans and in order to help solve their problems, the effect of acceptance and commitment-based psychotherapy on psychiatric veterans is investigated in mental health hospitals.

**Methods:** This quasi-experimental study with pre-test and post-test experimental design into two experimental and control groups among all psychiatric veterans of Dezful hospitals in the spring of 2020 in which 30 people were selected by random sampling and 15 of them were selected as experimental group and 15 people another control group that is considered random. Oxford Happiness test was taken as a pre-test from both groups and the experimental group was trained in acceptance and commitment based psychotherapy in eight sessions of two hours per week and the control group was not trained at all. Finally, Oxford happiness test was taken again from both groups. (Post-test), then with statistical tests Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk and t-test were performed for two independent groups with SPSS software and statistical analysis was performed and the results are as follows.

**Results:** Happiness post-test scores were significantly different between the experimental and control groups and in the experimental group the happiness score was higher, ie the intervention in Mani is effective based on acceptance and commitment. These findings were obtained with 95% confidence.

**Conclusion:** Therapeutic intervention based on the method of acceptance and commitment is effective in promoting the happiness of psychiatric veterans and is an effective help for their mental health and standard of living.

**Keyword:** Psychiatric Disorders, Cognitive Therapy, Happiness, Mental Disorders, psychiatric hospitals

## Background and Objectives

War is a phenomenon that, if imposed for any reason, can have short-term or long-term effects. The Iraq-Iran war is an important event in the life history of the Iranian people. This social reality has caused material, human and social damage<sup>1</sup>. One of the major psychological traumas of war is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in victims<sup>2</sup>. The presence of the mark (PTSD) in war veterans causes their disability to be more complex than other war veterans and makes it too mediocre for them to manage family, economic and livelihood affairs and education of other family members. This reaction affects children's personality. Mental health, marital satisfaction, divorce and separation have a great impact<sup>3</sup>. Psychotherapeutic interventions for PTSD include acceptance and commitment-based psychotherapy<sup>4</sup>. Post-traumatic stress disorder has several consequences in the physical and psychological dimensions of this disorder<sup>5</sup>.

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The best psychology refers to the fact that people are able to determine whether or not they have achieved a happy life that depends on success criteria<sup>6</sup>. One of the potential sources of positive emotions that has been considered in positive psychology is the feeling of happiness. Happiness is a statement of the positive value a person places on himself. Happiness has two aspects, one is emotional factors that represent the emotional experience of happiness, euphoria, contentment and other positive emotions, and the other is the cognitive evaluation of satisfaction from different realms of life that indicates happiness and psychological well-being. However, happiness is not a sign of lack of depression, but indicates the existence of a number of positive cognitive and emotional states<sup>7,8</sup>.

## Methods

The present study is a quasi-experimental study with a pre-test and post-test design with an experimental, control or control group. Gran Dezful hospital was selected and the criterion for entering informed consent to participate in the research project and not using psychotropic drugs and not receiving any previous training in psychotherapy was based on acceptance and commitment and also the criterion for leaving the research was dissatisfaction with participating in the project and absence of more than three training sessions. According to the exclusion criteria, 30 people remained and were randomly divided into two groups of 15 people. Webb. Oxford Happiness test was taken from both groups (pre-test) and scores were recorded. Group A (experimental group) underwent training based on acceptance and commitment in meetings. Two hours a week for 8 weeks and group B (control group) did not receive any training. At this stage, Oxford Happiness test was taken again from both groups and the results were recorded, then

while checking the normal pre-test and post-test scores with Levin, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Box and Student's t-test with 95% confidence interval were used for data analysis. Tools used in this research:

1. Oxford Happiness Inventory at OHI: The Oxford Happiness Inventory was used to measure happiness. The Inventory has 29 questions created in 1989 by Agargail et al. It is a maximum of 87 that the high score indicates greater happiness<sup>9</sup>. Various studies have shown the validity of checklist at an acceptable level. The review validity was reported to be 0.81 after 4 months, 0.67 after 5 months and 0.53 after 6 months<sup>10</sup>. In Iran, Ghazavi et al. Reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.93 for the entire list<sup>11</sup>. The reliability of the test by halving method is 0.92 and the reliability of the retest is 0.79<sup>12</sup>.

2. The protocol of acceptance and commitment used in this research: Introducing and stating the objectives of the workshop, conducting a pre-test. Identifying Acceptance and Commitment Psychotherapy, Objectives and Axes of Treatment, Information about the Disorder, Homework. Creating creative frustration, assessing the desire for change, summarizing, homework. Reviewing past sessions, identifying inefficient strategies, concept of acceptance, summarizing, homework. Review of previous sessions, homework and behavioral commitment, application of cognitive fault technique, homework. Surveying, expressing feelings and emotions resulting from the tasks of the previous session, fulfilling the commitment. Provide feedback, create the ability to choose the right action. Provide feedback to group members, thank and appreciate the cooperation and post-test<sup>13</sup>.

## Results

Pre-test and post-test scores of two experimental groups (two) and control (one) related to 30 psychiatric veterans of Dezful hospitals in the spring of 2020, the results of the Oxford Happiness Test under the

statistical tests of Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Shapiro-Wilk and t -test was run for two independent groups with SPSS software and the results are as follows.

**Table 1.** Normality of pre-test and post-test scores for both experimental and control groups

	method	Tests of Normality					
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
posttest	one	.126	15	.200 <sup>*</sup>	.953	15	.571
	two	.154	15	.200 <sup>*</sup>	.902	15	.102
pretest	one	.105	15	.200 <sup>*</sup>	.966	15	.793
	two	.203	15	.096	.904	15	.108

Because in both tests the amount of error for group one is 0.200 and 0.793 is more than 0.05 and also because for group two the

amount of error is 0.096 and 0.108 so the pre-test scores are normal. 0.102 is greater than 0.05 so post-test scores are normal.

**Table 2:** Statistical description of post-test scores

	method	Group Statistics			
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
posttest	one	15	58.53	14.267	3.684
	two	15	69.93	13.210	3.411

**Table 3:** Equality of variances Inequality of means of the two experimental groups and control of post-test scores

	Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
posttest	Equal variances assumed	.054	.817	2.271	28	.031	-11.400	5.020	21.684	-1.116
	Equal variances not assumed			2.271	27.836	.031	-11.400	5.020	21.686	-1.114

Because the error rate is 0.817, the variances of post-test scores are equal for the control and experimental groups Because the error rate is 0.031 and is less than 0.05, in the case of equality of variances, the post-test scores

of the two experimental and control groups are not equal and the experimental group has a higher average, ie the acceptance and commitment method is effective.

**Table 4:** Statistical description of pre-test scores

Group Statistics					
	method	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest	one	15	57.80	15.943	4.116
	two	15	59.33	13.983	3.610

**Table 5:** Equality of variances and means of pre-test scores for the experimental and control groups

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
pretest	Equal variances assumed	.361	.553	-.280	28	.782	-1.533	5.475	-12.749	9.682
	Equal variances not assumed			-.280	27.532	.782	-1.533	5.475	-12.758	9.691

Because the error rate is equal to 0.553 and is greater than 0.05, in terms of equality of variances of pre-test scores of the two experimental and control groups, according to the error value of 0.782, which is greater than 0.05, the means of pre-test scores are not significantly different with 95% confidence.

## Discussion

It has been widely reported that the VA needs to do a better job of developing strategies for routine mental health screening and early intervention for all service members before they return to civilian life. This effort would entail identifying the several signs and symptoms that veterans may display prior to attempting suicide: (1) depression, (2) sleeping poorly, (3) losing weight, (4) telling family members they feel like a burden on their spouse, (5) drinking, and (6) using drugs. Given that this information often provides a clearer picture of potential mental disorders

and indications that a veteran may be contemplating suicide, a plan of intervention based on these signs could be the first step for a crisis intervention team to provide needed assistance and conduct a psychiatric evaluation. The aim of this study was to compare the effect of acceptance and commitment-based psychotherapy on the growth of happiness of psychiatric veterans in Iran. This study shows that this psychotherapy increases the happiness of psychiatric veterans which is consistent with the research findings on the effectiveness of mindfulness-based stress reduction on psychological well-being in patients with PTSD and their relatives<sup>14</sup>. Happiness is the need for a healthy life and growth factors since 1960, research on happiness has increased and various organizations have studied happiness. In these studies, three basic orientations can be identified: 1) In some of them, measuring happiness and providing tools to measure happiness has been the main goal. 2) In some studies that

have been more focused, the study of factors affecting happiness has been considered and 3) in another group, ways to increase happiness have been evaluated. Acceptance and commitment therapy is a suitable way to increase happiness<sup>15</sup>. Psychotherapeutic interventions for PTSD include acceptance and commitment-based psychotherapy<sup>4</sup>. Post-traumatic stress disorder has several consequences in the physical and psychological dimensions of this disorder<sup>5</sup>. The best psychology refers to the fact that people are able to determine whether or not they have achieved a happy life that depends on success criteria.

## Conclusion

Examining and comparing the two experimental groups that underwent therapeutic intervention based on acceptance and commitment (two) and the control group that did not perform this intervention (one), it was found that the mean post-test scores of the two groups could not be different and 95% confidence according to t Student For two independent experimental and control groups. Based on the small sample size, the findings should be interpreted and generalized cautiously. It can be said that psychotherapy based on acceptance and commitment is effective on psychiatric veterans in Dezful hospitals.

## Abbreviations:

PTSD= Posttraumatic stress disorder;  
ACT=Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

## Competing interest:

The authors declare no competing interest

## Authors contributions:

Simin Farshadi is the producer of the article and Mohammad Hatami is the supervisor

and the responsible author is Maryam Kalhor Nia Golkar, the supervisor who all participated in this research.

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