

Research Paper**Effect of Teaching the Components of Spiritual Intelligence on Death Anxiety in the Elderly**

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ABSTRACT**Objectives** This study aimed at studying the effect of teaching spiritual intelligence principles on death anxiety among senior citizens living in retirement homes of Sanandaj City.**Methods & Materials** This study was a practical and quasi-experimental research performed by pre- and post-testing the control and experimental groups. The statistical population comprised all elderly residents of retirement homes in Sanandaj City. Twenty subjects were selected by convenient sampling from among the individuals who were willing to participate in the study and who received a high score in the death anxiety scale. They were then equally divided into two groups (10 subjects per group). The fear of death scale devised by Collet- Lester (1969) was used for pre-testing the subjects. The members of the experimental group received Spiritual Intelligence-based intervention in eight 90-minute sessions. The control group received no such intervention during this period. After the intervention, all the subjects were post-tested. The collected data were analyzed by the one-way and multi-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the SPSS-22 software.**Results** The mean and standard deviation of the age of the experimental group was 62.5±5.68 years and control group was 63.1±4.33 years. The results of covariance analysis showed a significant difference in post-test between the experimental group (120.9±4.81) and the control group (131.3±8.65) ($P \leq 0.01$). So, the results indicate that educating the subjects about spiritual intelligence components reduced their death anxiety ($P \leq 0.01$). The intervention also reduced the death of others and dying of others dimensions in the subjects ($P \leq 0.01$), but no significant impact was observed for the death of self and dying of self dimensions.**Conclusion** According to the findings, teaching spiritual intelligence principles reduces death anxiety. Therefore, it is recommended that more attention should be paid to teaching spiritual aspects in retirement centers.**Key words:**

Spiritual intelligence, Death anxiety, Old people

Extended Abstract**1. Objectives**

One of the most common mental disorders of old age is death anxiety, which means predicting your death and fear of the death of important people in life [1]. Such feelings can lead to helplessness,

physical changes, loss of control, feeling lonely and guilty and can affect the functions of ordinary life of the individuals [2]. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the factors responsible for reducing death anxiety. Given this background, this study aimed to investigate the effect of teaching the components of spiritual intelligence on the amount of death anxiety in the elderly living in Sanandaj's nursing homes. To achieve this goal, two questions were considered and examined: 1)

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Is the training of spiritual intelligence components effective in reducing death anxiety?; and 2) Does learning the components of spiritual intelligence reduce the dimensions of death anxiety (death of yourself, seeing you are dying, death of your neighbors, seeing dying relatives)?

2. Methods and Materials

This study is applied research in terms of purpose, and it is semi-pilot with pre-test-post-test and control group in terms of implementation method. The statistical population of the research was all people living in nursing homes in Sanandaj in the first half of 2016. The sample selection process was as follows. After obtaining the necessary legal permissions, 100 Death Anxiety Inventory questionnaires were distributed among the elderly people with the aim of screening. Those who had an average score for their death anxiety in two higher deciles were recognized as eligible subjects. Eventually, these 20 subjects were placed randomly in two experimental and control groups. The inclusion criteria were having reading and writing skills, lack of organ defects in the auditory, speaking and visionary organs, not having acute cognitive impairment, the desire to participate in the training component of spiritual intelligence, and a high score on death anxiety. It should be noted that during the sample selection, ethical considerations such as freedom of participation or non-participation in research, anonymous question-

naire, obtaining legal licenses, and obtaining moral confirmation were observed. This research was approved by the Ethics Committee of Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj Branch.

After selecting the sample subjects, the Collett-Lester's Fear of Death Scale (1969) was distributed as a pre-test on subjects. This scale included 32 questions and 4 subscales of death of the self, seeing own death, the death of surroundings, and seeing neighbors dying. Then the experimental intervention group received the training approach on spiritual intelligence concepts in 8 sessions for 90 minutes. During this time, the control group did not receive any intervention. After the end of the intervention sessions, the posttest was performed on subjects. Using one-way covariance analysis and multimode analysis and SPSS22 software, the collected data were analyzed.

3. Results

The mean and standard deviation of the age of the experimental group was 62.5 ± 5.62 years and for the control group was 63.1 ± 4.3 years. In Table 1, the mean and standard deviation of the subjects' death anxiety scores are presented in the pre-test and post-test phase.

After providing the descriptive findings, inferential analysis of data is presented. The normal distribution of data was examined through Shapiro-Wilk's test. Ac-

Table 1. Mean and standard deviations of anxiety scores for subjects

Variable	Group	Pretest (N=10)		Post-test (N=10)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Death of the self	Experimental	34.8	3.08	32.3	2.11
	Control	33.7	4.06	33.3	2.67
Seeing the self dying	Experimental	32.5	2.72	30.4	1.96
	Control	32.4	1.9	32.8	2.35
Death of companions	Experimental	35.2	2.62	28.4	2.32
	Control	35.3	3.23	32.1	3.84
Seeing dying companions	Experimental	34.6	1.71	29.8	1.75
	Control	33.9	1.66	33.1	3.54
Total score of death anxiety	Experimental	137.1	8.13	120.9	4.81
	Control	135.3	7.82	131.3	8.65

cordingly, the amount of Shapiro-Wilk's statistic on the death anxiety score in the pre-test equaled to 0.927, and the level of significance was 0.136. The amount of Shapiro-Wilk's statistic on Death Anxiety Rating in post-test equaled to 0.922, and the level of significance was 0.109. Due to the lack of significant results and confirmation of zero assumption, it was ensured that data distribution is normal. Therefore, parametric tests were used for data analysis (Table 1).

To check the first research question, one-way covariance analysis was used. The results of the first question showed that the effect of independent variables on the training of spiritual intelligence components on the reduction of the total death score of the elderly was statistically significant ($F=27.053$ and $Sig.=0.001$). The post-test mean scores of the experimental group were found to be decreased compared to the control group. Therefore, it can be said that learning the components of spiritual intelligence could significantly reduce the total death anxiety in the experimental group compared to the control group.

Multivariate covariance analysis was used to investigate the second question. Based on the results, the values of F calculated in the case of 4 tests of Piley effect, Wilks Lambda, Hotelling effect, and the Roy's Largest Root Test were significant at the level of 0.01. Therefore, it was found that there is at least a significant difference between the two pairs. The main results of the covariance analysis also showed that the values of F calculated in group variables in the dimensions of death of relatives and seeing dying companions ($F=6.727, 27.675$) are significant at the level of $P \leq 0.05$. But these values were not significant in terms of death of the self and seeing themselves dying. Significance in subscales of death of relatives and seeing dying companions means that the training of spiritual intelligence components has been successful. These two subscales in the test group are reduced compared to the control group.

4. Conclusion

The results of this study showed that learning the components of spiritual intelligence reduces the extent of death anxiety (deaths of companions and seeing relatives dying) in the elderly. However, there were no significant results in reducing the dimensions of death anxiety such as death of the self and seeing themselves dying. These results were consistent with previous research findings [3-7].

The limitation of this research was the lack of long-term follow-up of the training results because of the time limit for the research. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies should focus on long-term implications of interventions based on spiritual intelligence training. Overall, considering the findings of the research, it is recommended that training courses on spiritual intelligence components should be held in nursing homes, hospitals, and similar environments where patients and helpless people reside.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.