

Research Paper: Effectiveness of Psychological Empowerment on General Health of Mothers of Children With Disability Under the Community-Based Rehabilitation Program



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ABSTRACT

Objective Parents face a lot of challenges with the birth of a child with disability. According to research findings, mothers of the children with disabilities have lower levels of mental health than mothers of typically-developing children, and the presence of disabilities in family members creates mental and emotional problems for other family members, especially mothers. These mothers are unaware of their physical and mental health as compared to mothers of typically-developing children. These conditions can lead to mothers' losing interest in establishing relationships with their relatives that can end in depression and worsening of mothers' mental health. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the psychological status of mothers of children with disabilities and consider the essential role of parents in planning any intervention program for people with disabilities. For this reason, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of psychological empowerment on the general health of mothers of the children with disabilities in a community-based rehabilitation program.

Materials & Methods The research method was quasi-experimental and with pre-test and post-test design and control group. The statistical population of this study included all mothers with children with disabilities in the Marvdasht City, Iran, who participated in the community-based rehabilitation program in 2017. Out of this community, 30 individuals were selected by convenience sampling method and randomly divided into two groups of 15 each (control and experimental). Both groups were taken pre-test and the experimental group received psychological empowerment intervention in ten 90-minute sessions (two sessions per week), while this intervention was not provided to the control group and at the end, a post-test was performed for both groups. The general health questionnaire was 28 questions from Goldberg and Hillier. The obtained data were analyzed by analysis of covariance.

Results The intervention of the psychological empowerment program on general health made a significant difference between the two experimental and control groups in the post-test results ($P < 0.001$). In other words, general health in the experimental group was significantly better than that in the control group. Therefore, psychological empowerment affects the general health of mothers of the children with disabilities covered by community-based rehabilitation programs. In addition, the intervention of the psychological empowerment program on the subscales of physical health caused a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the post-test ($P < 0.001$), i.e. physical health in the experimental group was significantly better than that in the control group. Moreover, the intervention on the anxiety subscale caused a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the post-test ($P < 0.001$). It means that anxiety in the experimental group was significantly reduced compared to the control group. Finally, the intervention of the psychological empowerment program on the subscale of the disorder in social function caused a significant difference between the experimental and control post-test results ($P < 0.001$). In other words, the disorder in social function in the experimental

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group significantly was lower compared to the control group. It is worth noting that according to the research findings, the intervention of the psychological empowerment program did not have a significant effect on the subscales of depression. Therefore, psychological empowerment affected three subscales of general health (i.e. physical health, anxiety and social function disorder) of mothers of children with disability under community-based rehabilitation program.

Conclusion Present study indicates that psychological empowerment improves the general health of mothers covered by community-based rehabilitation program and has affected three subscales of general health (physical health, anxiety, and social function disorder) of mothers of children with disability under community-based rehabilitation program. Therefore, officials and custodians of the community-based rehabilitation program must consider psychological empowerment important for its wide-ranging implementation and its important implications for domestic action. It should be reminded that the present study was conducted only on mothers covered by the community-based rehabilitation program, so its results should be generalized to other mothers with caution. The lack of follow-up was also one of the limitations of the present study. Therefore, for future research, it is suggested that a program be run with the presence of both parents. A follow-up study should also be conducted to investigate the continuation of the effects of intervention. It is also recommended that the authorities of the welfare organization provide psychological empowerment workshops for all members of the family with disabilities by allocating more funds and supporting community-based associations with rehabilitation programs. In the end, it is suggested that a psychological empowerment program be designed and implemented to improve the general health of mothers of children with disabilities covered by community-based rehabilitation program.

Keywords:

Psychological empowerment, General health, Community-based rehabilitation

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