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Thesis Approval

The effectiveness of EMDR treatment approach in treating the parents or the caregivers and the wives of young martyrs with PTSD and depression symptoms in Bethlehem district

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Abstract

The current study is designed to examine the effectiveness of EMDR treatment in treating PTSD and depression symptoms among the parents or the caregivers and the wives of the young martyrs from Bethlehem area. A quasi- experimental design was utilized to achieve this purpose. The data was collected by utilizing a self-report questionnaire distributed to 249 family members of the young martyrs in Bethlehem district. A total of 180 participants agreed to fill in the questionnaire. The response rate was 72%. Eighty six participants were diagnosed PTSD and forty of them accepted to participate in the experiment. 36 participants completed the experiment. (17 in the intervention group and 19 in the control group) and four dropped out, In the follow up stage, 14 participants agreed to fill in the questionnaires. Statistically analysis was performed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), Version 18.0. Descriptive statistics and nonparametric testes such as Wilxocion W were used.

The results of the study revealed that, EMDR treatment approach was effective in treating PTSD symptoms and depression symptoms at the level of (0.05). For example, the mean rank of the post test for the intervention group decreased from 16.88% to 9.0%, and in the control group increased from 19.95% to 27.0% $p= (0.00)$. At the follow up for PTSD, the mean rank of the intervention group decreased from 9.00% to 7.50%. For the depression, the mean rank decreased from 17.88% to 9.71% for the intervention group and increased from 19.05% to 26.37% for the control group $p= (0.00.)$

The study further sought to determine the role of a number of demographic variables in the context of the major finding. The duration of loss was statistically significant in relationship with PTSD level ($p=0.016$).Also the marital status was statistically significant in relationship with depression level ($p=0.025$). However, the study's findings did not reveal significant differences between PTSD levels and age, gender, educational level, marital status, profession, place of residency, family relations and age of the martyrs. The implications of the study indicate the importance of using EMDR as a treatment modality for the Palestinians who are suffering from PTSD or depression as a result of a family member's martyrdom. Future research would include a larger sample with greater numbers of participants from the West Bank and Gaza.

ملخص الدراسة

مدى فعالية منهج ال EMDR لعلاج اعراض ما بعد الصدمة النفسية واعراض الاكتئاب لدى ابناء وزوجات الشهداء في منطقة بيت لحم.

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اشراف الدكتورة: منى حميد

هدفت هذه الدراسة الى اختبار مدى فعالية منهج العلاج القائم على تخفيف الحساسية وتمرير المعلومات من خلال حركة العيون في علاج اعراض ما بعد الصدمة واعراض الاكتئاب لدى ابناء وامهات واهالي وزوجات الشهداء الشباب في منطقة بيت لحم. استخدم المنهج شبه التجريبي الذي يقوم على اختيار عينة عشوائية من اجل تحقيق هذا الهدف . جمعت المعلومات اللازمة للدراسة بواسطة استبانات. وافق 180 من اهالي الشهداء على تعبئة الاستمارة الخاصة بالبحث. بلغت نسبة المشاركة 72%. تم تشخيص 87 من المبحوثين بانهم يعانون من اضطراب اعراض ما بعد الصدمة اعتمادا على مقياس اعراض ما بعد الصدمة PCL. وافق 40 منهم على المشاركة في التجربة. 36 منهم استمروا في الدراسة حتى استكمال مرحلة التطبيق (العلاج) بينما انسحب اربعة منهم قبل انتهاء الدراسة. استخدم برنامج الرزم الاحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS) لتحليل العينة، حيث استعملت النسخة 18 من هذا البرنامج. كذلك استخدم منهج التحليل الوصفي، بالاضافة الى (Nonparametric testes such as Wilxocion W) لتحليل المعلومات.

تظهر نتائج الدراسة ان منهج تخفيف الحساسية وتمرير المعلومات من خلال حركة العيون فعالا في علاج اعراض ما بعد الصدمة واعراض الاكتئاب عند مستوى الدلالة (0.05). على سبيل المثال: لقد انخفض مستوى اعراض ما بعد الصدمة في المقياس البعدي للمجموعة التجريبية من 16.88% الى 9.0% ولكن هذا المقياس ارتفع في المجموعة الضابطة من 19.95% الى 27.0% عند مستوى الدلالة (0.000). وقد اظهرت نتائج مرحلة المتابعة التي تمت بعد اربعة شهور من الانهاء ان مستوى اعراض ما بعد الصدمة للمشاركين في المجموعة التجريبية قد انخفض ايضا من 9.00% الى 7.50%.

لقد اشارت نتائج الدراسة ان معدل الاكتئاب في المجموعة التجريبية قد انخفض ايضا من 17.88% الى 9.71% بينما ارتفع في المجموعة الضابطة من 19.05% الى 26.37% عند مستوى الدلالة

0.000. ومن خلال الدراسة ايضا تم اختبار فعالية العلاج بارتباطها بالمتغيرات الديموغرافية المختلفة. حيث اشارت النتائج الى وجود فروق ذات دلالة احصائية لمستوى اعراض ما بعد الصدمة لدى الافراد الذين تعرضوا للفقدان في الفترة 1987-1999 عند المستوى 0.016. بالإضافة الى وجود فروق ذات دلالة احصائية لمستوى الاكتئاب لدى المتزوجين عند المستوى 0.025. كما تظهر النتائج فروق ذات دلالة احصائية تعزى لبقية المتغيرات. اظهرت النتائج ايضا انه لا يوجد فروق ذات دلالة احصائية في معدل اعراض ما بعد الصدمة بين المجموعة التجريبية والمجموعة الضابطة تعزى لمتغير العمر، الجنس، صلة القرابة، مكان السكن، مستوى التعليم، العمل، عمر الشهد، والقرابة الزمنية للاستشهاد عند مستوى الدلالة 0.05.

لقد اشارت النتائج الى اهمية استخدام منهاج تخفيف الحساسية وتمرير المعلومات من خلال حركة العيون في مساعدة الفلسطينيين الذين يعانون من اعراض ما بعد الصدمة ومن اعراض الاكتئاب الناتج عن استشهاد احد افراد الاسرة. هذه النتائج تشير الى الحاجة لاجراء ابحاث مستقبلية موسعة حيث تشمل اعداد اكبر من المشاركين سواء من الضفة الغربية او من قطاع غزة.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This study examines the effectiveness of EMDR treatment approach in the treatment of either parents or caregivers and wives of Palestinian young martyrs with PTSD and depression symptoms in Bethlehem district. A review of the literature reveals a general lack of knowledge about the effectiveness of EMDR treatment approach in treating victims of political violence in ongoing trauma such as the case of Palestine.

Before embarking on a discussion of the problem statement, aim and objectives of the current study, it is essential to have a brief overview of the political history and situation in Palestine. In general, the Palestinian society is young. For example, in 2007, children under the age of 18 were 2 millions, i.e. approximately half of population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip are children. The percentage of individuals aged (0-14) constituted 41.9% of the total population, (39.4% was in the West Bank while 44.4% in Gaza Strip). (Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, 2010) The percentage of young people represented 29.8% of the total population: 40.2% of them were adolescents aged between 10-19 years, and 60.4% were youths aged 15-24 years. (Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, 2012)

Since 1948, Palestinians have suffered from repeated episodes of war and conflict which reoccurred about every seven to ten years. This continued state of war and occupation compounded with continued sense of oppression has affected several aspects of the Palestinians lives psychologically, socially and functionally. (Awwad, 1998; El Sarraj et al, 2005) As a result family members such as children and adults can develop PTSD symptoms as a result of exposure to traumatic stressors such as being witnesses of death or violence. (DSM IV-TR, 2000)

Palestinian families, in particular, faced war and political traumas which ended up with the passing away of a family member. The family is the basic unit in the society which consists of more than one member related by blood, marriage, kinship and bonds. The members of the family live together in a single household, and they communicate and interact with each other in social roles such as mother, father, husband and so on. A family has different functions such as provision of resources such as money and shelter, nurture and support of other family members which is the primarily role of the family and it includes providing comfort, warmth, and reassurance for family members. (Hepworth et al, 1997) Each family constitutes an organization that has its own specific characteristics which affect its members ways of reaction to traumatic events such as death of a family member. (Danielson et al, 1993) Some families may experience normal bereavement, mourning, grief and some may develop depression and PTSD. The need to treat these victims increases by time and the need to find a suitable treatment approach is determined by the community. (Giacaman, 2004) Many studies focused on the effect of war on family members such as children and women, but there is a lack of studies that focus on treatment of family members with mental problems such as PTSD due to loss of a loved person. (El Sarraj et al, 2005)

1.2. Research Problem

As mentioned above, Palestinian people are living in tragedy as a result of the Israeli occupation since 1948 and confronting several ongoing forms of trauma and violence. According to the Palestinian Bureau of Statistic, between the year 2000 and 2009, 7,235 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces, 6,695 of which were men and 540 were women. In West Bank, there were 2,083 victims – 2,059 males and 124 females while in Gaza Strip there were 5,015 victims - 4,501 males and 414 females. The rest of the martyrs were from the 1948 area and outside the Palestinian Territory. (Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, 2010) The year 2009 was the bloodiest with 1,219 Palestinian martyrs followed by 2002 with 1,192 martyrs. (Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, 2010) Children were mainly targeted by the Israeli military. For example, between 2000 and 2008, 959 Palestinian children were martyred, constituting 18.2% of the total number

... 384 of which children were in the West Bank, 573 were in Gaza Strip and two ... in the Occupied Territory of 1948. (Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, 2010)

... Palestinian Human Rights Information Centre (1993) reported that during the period ... from 1987 to 1993, there were 130,472 injuries and 1,282 deaths, 332 of ... among children. Among the victims, there were individuals who were shot, ... or burned to the extent that they suffered from a permanent disability. Also ... 57,000 Palestinians were arrested, many of whom were subjected to systematic ... psychological torture; 481 were deported, and 2,532 had their homes demolished. ... financial burdens on the inflicted families in terms of medical and ... care, loss of productive time, chronic disability, loss of function, and loss of life ... were enormous. (Khamis, 1995) Furthermore, as a result of the Israeli killing of ... of Palestinian children and adolescents, their family members grieved their loss ... their parents and wives. Many studies which focused on the effect of losing a family ... the family showed that they developed many psychological or mental problems such ... complicated grief and PTSD. (Michon, 2003; Murphy et al, 1999; Murphy et al, 2000; Schneider et al, 2007; Neria et al, 2005; Wijngaards-de Meij et al, 2006; Onrus et al, 2007) For example, Maghalseh (2003) conducted a study in Bethlehem district to investigate the ... of PTSD among Palestinian people subjected to losing a family member as a martyr, ... family member in Israeli prisons, or having their houses demolished by the Israeli ... The study sample, both males and females aged 16 years old and above were selected ... areas including city, villages and camps. The sample was randomly selected and ... of 752 (46.6% were males and 53.1% were females). This sample was divided into ... of 7 participants and each group represented city, villages, and camps in Bethlehem ... All the participants were from families who lost one or more family members as martyrs. ... who lost a family member as a martyr, 21% were the wives of the martyrs, 41% ... parents, and 37% were the siblings. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The result ... showed that 67.2% of the participants met the criteria of PTSD such as intense fear, ... and horror. Also the participants showed other symptoms such as recurrent intrusive ... thoughts, or perception (35.5%), recurrent distressing dreams (27.7%), and flashback ... (18.7%). Furthermore, 60% of the participants were unable to recall important aspects

traumatic event. They were affected by the trauma symptoms for various periods. For example, 52% had PTSD symptoms for more than one month, and 48% had the PTSD symptoms for more than three months. In addition, 4.6% had delayed onsets, while 70.9% were significantly distressed and suffered impairment in social and occupational functions. Furthermore, the results showed that the Palestinians who lost a family member as a result of the violence were more affected when compared to other participants who had a loved one in prison or in jail. In addition, it was found out that the wives who lost husbands as martyrs were more affected by trauma when compared to parents who lost sons, or siblings who lost brothers. (Maghalseh, 2003) The researcher proposed the reason why widows were subjected to continuing stress and concluded that this did not only mean loss of the family provider, but also that the widows would be trusted on the wives' shoulders. (Maghalseh, 2003)

Because of this harsh situation, Palestinians tried to cope by using traditional adaptive mechanisms such as family cohesion, tribal structure and political involvement. (El Sarraj et al, 2000) However, these efforts were not enough to deal with such mental problems which required well equipped and trained clinical psychologists and mental health professionals to offer suitable treatment and interventions such as psychotherapists to help the traumatized people especially women to reduce their stress and to cope with new changes in their life. (Giacaman, 2004) Therefore, different treatment approaches such as CBT, family therapy, art therapy, and relaxation were used to overcome these problems. The EMDR is one potential treatment approach to treat victims of political violence as it showed good results for treating PTSD symptoms as indicated by many studies worldwide. (Zakrot- Hodali et al, 2008; Power et al, 2002; Lee et al, 2002; Kemp, 2009; Greenwald, 1994; Wilson et al, 1995,1997 and Ironson et al, 2002) Recently EMDR is one of the treatment approaches used in Palestine. However, there is a lack of studies that assess EMDR effectiveness in treating either parents or caregivers and young martyrs who suffered from PTSD or depression symptoms in Palestine as a result of political violence.

1.2. Justification and significance of the study

Therefore, this particular study is conducted for the following reasons:

1. The large number of young people killed by Israeli soldiers may increase the prevalence of PTSD and depression symptoms among their family members.
2. In Palestine, although EMDR approach is one of the treatment modalities that are used, there is a lack of studies that examine its effectiveness in treating either parents or caregivers and wives who had (PTSD) symptoms as a result of losing their child or husband due to Israeli political violence.
3. This study might be the first quasi-experimental that assesses EMDR effectiveness in Palestine.

1.3. Study aim and objectives

1.3.1. Study aim

The main aim of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the EMDR treatment approach in treating other traumatized parents or caregivers and wives of young martyrs aged 25 years old as a result of Israeli violence in Bethlehem district.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

1. To assess the prevalence of PTSD among parents or caregivers and wives of young martyrs in Bethlehem area.
2. To assess the prevalence of depression among parents or caregivers and wives of young martyrs in Bethlehem area.

- 3- To assess the prevalence of life traumatic events that parents or caregivers and wives of young martyrs experienced in Bethlehem area.
- 5- To examine the effectiveness of EMDR in treating PTSD symptoms and depression of parents or caregivers and wives of young martyrs killed as a result of the Israeli violence in compared with the control group.
- 6- To examine the effectiveness of EMDR in treating parents or caregivers and wives of young martyrs with PTSD and depression symptoms in relation to independent variables such as age, gender, duration of loss, educational level, profession, family relation, marital status, martyr age, and place of residency.

1.5. Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis is formal statement of the expected relationships between two or more variables. The hypothesis translates the research problems and purpose into clear explanation. (Burns, 1999) It is a prediction about the relationships between two or more variables. (Polit et al, 2004)

The main hypotheses of the current study are:

- 1- There is no statistically significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in relation to PTSD level at α 0.05
- 2- There is no statistically significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in relation to depression level at α 0.05
- 3- There is no statistically significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in relation to age at α 0.05
- 4- There is no statistically significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in relation to family relation with the martyr at α 0.05
- 5- There is no statistically significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in relation to place of residency at α 0.05
- 6- There is no statistically significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in relation to education level at α 0.05

- 7- There are no statistically significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in relation to marital status at $\alpha 0.05$
- 8- There are no statistically significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in relation to profession at $\alpha 0.05$
- 9- There are no statistically significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in relation to the martyr's age at $\alpha 0.05$
- 10- There is no statistically significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in relation to gender at $\alpha 0.05$
- 11- There is no statistically significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in relation to duration of loss at $\alpha 0.05$

1.6. Feasibility of the study

1. Researcher interest, knowledge and training in EMDR therapy has helped to facilitate the process of conducting this research.
2. Ethical approval was obtained from Al Quds University. Also the administrations of the Martyrs and Family Care Association and the Psycho-Social Counseling Center for Women (PSCCW) in Bethlehem were approached and accepted to facilitate the study.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

- 1- The small sample size may affect the generalization of the results in relation to the general population.
- 2- Only participants from Bethlehem area were included in the study and this may limit the generalization of the findings to other areas.
- 3- The participants of the study had the experience of loss for long periods of time so recollection of their traumatic memories might be affected.

1.8. Summary

1. The loss of a family member as a result of political violence in Palestine produced high prevalence of PTSD and depression symptoms. Different treatment approaches need to be used in order to overcome these problems.
2. EMDR is one of the potential treatment approaches that are used to treat the victims of political violence with PTSD symptoms.
3. The aim of the current study is to examine the effectiveness of EMDR in treating PTSD symptoms among parents or caregivers and wives of young martyrs in Bethlehem area.
4. The chapter also presents the study objectives, research hypotheses, limitations and the feasibility of the current study.

6.3. Conclusion

This might be the first study in Palestine assessing the effectiveness of EMDR treatment approach in treating parents (or caregivers) and wives of young martyrs suffering from PTSD symptoms. The findings indicate that the EMDR treatment approach is effective in treating PTSD symptoms and depression symptoms among family members of martyrs.

Also EMDR holds merit not only for effectiveness as evident throughout the study but it is also a cost-effective, short-term treatment that results in comparatively minimal stigmatizing. EMDR showed results with specific importance in the Palestine context, where people are inclined to be hesitant in seeking mental health services due to security reasons or lack of knowledge and resources. Moreover, the situation of ongoing trauma that the Palestinians have lived in for more than 64 years which produced huge number of traumatized people needs evidenced based service.

In addition, due to the high prevalence of PTSD symptoms among Palestinians, there is a need to apply different treatment approaches in order to help the victims of political violence; one of them is EMDR.

Recommendations

The results of the current study indicate that parents or caregivers and wives of young martyrs suffer from severe PTSD and depression symptoms as a result of losing their sons, daughters or husbands due to Israeli violence. To help them overcome their suffering, EMDR was offered, however the collaboration of several other Palestinian parties is required to achieve a complete rehabilitation process:

1. Palestinian Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Welfare

- a.* Develop a well-funded National Health Plan to cover the increasing needs of mental health services as a result of the ongoing traumas that the Palestinians are confronted with.
- b.* Establish a regulatory framework. This should include the Palestinian Authority psychological and mental services to offer different psychological treatment approaches including the EMDR as part of government comprehensive services to family members of martyrs that they receive.
- c.* Increase public awareness about the importance of mental health. This should help in changing negative attitudes and reducing the stigma towards mental health services and mental illness. This can be achieved by spreading awareness through various types of media, such as TV, newspapers and magazines.
- d.* Hold and organize conferences on the state of mental health of the Palestinian people under military violence and effective treatment approaches in co-operation with national, and international mental health community and experts.

2. Palestinian civic society institutions

- a.* Training available for counselors and therapists needs to be community based in order to fully understand culture and address stigmatization and trust.
- b.* A comprehensive approach to treatment such as EMDR should be applied to treatment of trauma victims. The therapy should be provided immediately after the traumatic event, on continuous basis to help victims ventilate and discharge their feelings to prevent PTSD symptoms.
- c.* Create a knowledge network of training, research and applications in order to sustain the transfer of knowledge about trauma and PTSD.
- d.* More studies are required with involvement of greater numbers of participants from the West Bank and Gaza, as well as institutions from a variety of different settings (governmental, private, and non-governmental institutions).

- e. Address the need to conduct further studies to examine the effectiveness of EMDR on additional population such as torture victims and their family members.
- f. Most importantly, a sense of trust and security must be established, which would enable the therapeutic relationship to succeed, since security is unavailable neither for victim nor for therapists.
- g. More studies are needed to assess the effectiveness of different treatment approaches such as EMDR in the treatment of PTSD among Palestinians.
- h. More researches are needed to assess the prevalence of PTSD and other mental disorders among Palestinians in general
- i. Media such as TV has an obligation to raise awareness about the effects of PTSD and its treatment options. This would help not only in treatment, but it would also help in erasing the social stigma associated with mental illness.
- j. The religious institution must be used as an instrument to encourage scientific treatment rather than its alternative and to encourage people to seek treatment for their mental health problems.