

PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT APPROACHES FOR OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: This study investigates the psychocorrection of obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCD) exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The research involved a cohort of 40 patients diagnosed with OCD, whose symptoms intensified during the pandemic. Participants underwent a series of psychocorrective interventions, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), exposure and response prevention (ERP), and mindfulness-based techniques. The efficacy of these interventions was assessed through pre- and post-treatment evaluations using standardized OCD symptom scales and patient self-reports. Results indicated significant improvements in OCD symptoms and overall mental well-being. Patients reported reduced anxiety and compulsive behaviors, and increased ability to manage obsessive thoughts. The findings suggest that targeted psychocorrective strategies can be effective in alleviating pandemic-induced exacerbations of OCD, highlighting the importance of adapting therapeutic approaches to current global health crises.

Keywords: Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, COVID-19, Psychocorrection, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Exposure and Response Prevention, Mindfulness, Pandemic.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menyelidiki psikokorelasi gangguan obsesif-kompulsif (OCD) yang diperburuk oleh pandemi COVID-19. Penelitian ini melibatkan kohort yang terdiri dari 40 pasien yang didiagnosis dengan OCD, yang gejalanya semakin parah selama pandemi. Para peserta menjalani serangkaian intervensi psikokorektif, termasuk terapi perilaku kognitif (CBT), pencegahan paparan dan respons (ERP), dan teknik berbasis kesadaran. Efektivitas intervensi ini dinilai melalui evaluasi sebelum dan sesudah perawatan dengan menggunakan skala gejala OCD terstandarisasi dan laporan diri pasien. Hasilnya menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan pada gejala OCD dan kesejahteraan mental secara keseluruhan. Pasien melaporkan berkurangnya kecemasan dan perilaku kompulsif, dan peningkatan kemampuan untuk mengelola pikiran obsesif. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi psikokorektif yang ditargetkan dapat efektif dalam mengurangi eksaserbasi OCD yang disebabkan oleh pandemi, menyoroti pentingnya mengadaptasi pendekatan terapeutik terhadap krisis kesehatan global saat ini.

Kata kunci: Gangguan Obsesif-Kompulsif, COVID-19, Psikokoreksi, Terapi Perilaku Kognitif, Pencegahan Paparan dan Respons, Mindfulness, Pandemi.



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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching effects on global mental health, exacerbating pre-existing psychiatric conditions and introducing new psychological challenges. One of the most notably affected disorders is obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). The pandemic, characterized by widespread fear, uncertainty, and disruption of daily routines, has intensified symptoms for individuals already struggling with OCD, leading to an increase in the severity and frequency of their symptoms.

OCD is marked by persistent, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors or mental acts (compulsions) performed to alleviate the distress caused by these thoughts. The pandemic

has heightened concerns about cleanliness, health, and safety, which align closely with common OCD themes, such as contamination fears and excessive checking behaviors. This has resulted in a significant aggravation of symptoms for many patients, making effective management and treatment of OCD during the pandemic particularly crucial.

The pandemic has introduced unique stressors that compound the challenges faced by individuals with OCD. Social isolation, constant media exposure, and fear of contracting or spreading the virus have all contributed to heightened anxiety and compulsive behaviors. For many, the disruption of daily routines and the shift to remote work and online learning environments have further exacerbated their symptoms. This underscores the urgent need for targeted psychocorrective interventions that address the specific challenges posed by the pandemic.

Understanding and addressing these pandemic-induced exacerbations of OCD is vital for several reasons. First, the increased severity of symptoms can lead to a deterioration in the overall quality of life, affecting personal relationships, work performance, and daily functioning. Second, the unique nature of the stressors introduced by the pandemic requires tailored therapeutic approaches that consider the new sources of anxiety and compulsive behavior. Standard treatments for OCD may need adaptation to effectively address the additional complexities introduced by the pandemic environment.

Research into effective psychocorrective strategies during COVID-19 is crucial for developing comprehensive treatment plans that can be applied during and beyond the pandemic. Insights gained from such studies can inform future interventions and improve the management of OCD in similar crisis situations. Additionally, these findings can contribute to broader mental health strategies, enhancing our understanding of how global emergencies impact psychiatric conditions and refining approaches to psychological care in unprecedented times.

In summary, the relevance of studying psychocorrection for OCD in the context of COVID-19 lies in the need to address the intensified challenges faced by patients, develop effective treatment strategies, and improve mental health outcomes during global crises. The findings will help adapt therapeutic approaches to better meet the needs of individuals with OCD, ensuring more effective management of their condition amid ongoing and future public health challenges.

Methods

This study included 40 patients with a diagnosis of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), who experienced a notable exacerbation of symptoms during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were randomly assigned to receive psychocorrective treatment incorporating cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), exposure and response prevention (ERP), and mindfulness-based techniques. The interventions were administered over a period of 12 weeks. OCD symptoms were assessed using standardized scales such as the Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale (Y-BOCS) and self-report questionnaires. Additionally, patients' overall mental well-being and response to treatment were monitored through regular follow-up sessions and self-assessment tools.

Results and Discussion

The study aimed to assess the efficacy of psychocorrective interventions for obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 40 patients with OCD, whose symptoms had worsened during the pandemic, participated in the study. The interventions included cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), exposure and response prevention (ERP), and mindfulness-based techniques, administered over a 12-week period.

The results revealed significant clinical improvements in OCD symptoms following the

psychocorrective interventions. Participants showed a marked reduction in symptoms as measured by the Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale (Y-BOCS). On average, Y-BOCS scores decreased by 40% from baseline to post-treatment evaluations. This reduction was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), indicating that the interventions effectively alleviated obsessive and compulsive symptoms.

A notable decrease in compulsive behaviors was observed across the participant group. Patients reported fewer and less intense compulsions related to contamination fears and safety rituals. This improvement was corroborated by self-report questionnaires, where 75% of participants indicated a substantial reduction in the frequency and severity of their compulsive actions. Additionally, qualitative feedback from patients highlighted a significant decrease in the time spent performing compulsions and an increased ability to resist engaging in them.

Mindfulness-based techniques were particularly effective in managing anxiety related to obsessive thoughts. Patients who participated in mindfulness sessions reported a 50% improvement in their ability to handle intrusive thoughts and associated anxiety. This was reflected in the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7), where average scores decreased by 45% post-treatment. The use of mindfulness strategies helped patients develop greater emotional resilience and cognitive flexibility, contributing to a more stable mental state.

Overall mental well-being improved significantly for the majority of patients. The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) scores, which assess overall psychological well-being, showed a 30% decrease on average. Patients reported better mood, reduced feelings of depression, and enhanced overall quality of life. Feedback from participants also indicated improved daily functioning and interpersonal relationships as a result of the psychocorrective interventions.

Adherence to the treatment protocol was high, with 85% of participants completing the full 12-week program. Satisfaction with the interventions was also high, with 80% of patients expressing that the treatments were helpful and would recommend them to others with similar experiences.

In summary, the study demonstrated that the psychocorrective interventions significantly reduced OCD symptoms and improved overall mental well-being in patients exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings support the effectiveness of tailored psychocorrection strategies, highlighting their potential to address both the direct and indirect impacts of global health crises on mental health.

Conclusion

The research demonstrates that targeted psychocorrective interventions, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), exposure and response prevention (ERP), and mindfulness-based techniques, are effective in managing obsessive-compulsive disorder symptoms exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The significant reduction in OCD symptoms and improved patient outcomes underscore the importance of adaptive therapeutic approaches during global health crises. These findings highlight the necessity for continued development and implementation of effective psychocorrection strategies to address the mental health challenges posed by pandemics and similar stress-inducing situations.

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