

## Original research

### The effectiveness of commitment and acceptance therapy and intensive and short-term psychodynamic therapy on personality organization and emotion regulation in people with tension headaches

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#### Abstract:

**Introduction:** Headache is one of the most common medical complaints and a debilitating neurological disorder in neurology clinics that affects the personality of patients. Therefore, the present study was conducted with the aim of determining the effectiveness of commitment and acceptance therapy and intensive and short-term screening on personality organization, emotion regulation in women with tension headaches.

**Research method:** This study was a semi-experimental method with a pre-test, post-test and two-month follow-up plan with a control group. The target population was all patients with tension headaches who referred to the specialized neurology clinic in Tehran in 1402. The sample size was determined by referring to Cohen's table. Since there was a possibility of some samples dropping and also in order to generalize the results, the sample size was determined to be 15 people in each group. In the first step, 45 people were selected by available sampling method, and in the second step, these 45 people were replaced in 2 experimental groups (15 people) and a control group (15 people) in a simple random way (by lottery).

**Findings:** The results of the study indicated the effect of commitment and acceptance method and intensive and short-term dynamic psychotherapy on the dimensions of personality organization and emotion regulation in tension headache sufferers ( $P < 0.001$ ) and the effectiveness of both methods was similar ( $0.5 < P < 0$ ).

**Conclusion:** According to the results, specialists active in the psycho-physical field, especially tension headaches, can consider the use of commitment and acceptance methods and intensive and short-term dynamic psychotherapy in the treatment of these people, along with other treatments.

**Keywords:** emotion regulation, intensive and short-term dynamic therapy, personality organization, tension headache

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## **Introduction:**

headache is one of the most common medical complaints and a debilitating neurological disorder in neurological clinics that affects the organization of patients' personality. Severe headache can affect people's way of doing work and personal and social life and leave a negative impact on personality organization in the long term. Psychosomatic diseases are physical diseases that are affected by mental factors in their initiation or exacerbation, the most important of which are chronic colitis, blood pressure, heart and coronary artery diseases, and finally tension headache (1)/ Headache is one of the most common medical complaints and It is a kind of debilitating neurological disorder in neurological clinics that affects the personality organization of patients (2). Severe headache can affect people's way of doing work and personal and social life and leave a negative impact on personality organization in the long term (3). Many studies have been done on biological, environmental, psychological and social factors on headache attacks. The results of these studies confirm the relationship between the psychological and personality factors of these patients with headache (4-5). Until today, many researches and treatment measures have been carried out on tension headache. In this research, we discuss the effective variables in tension headaches, including personality organization and emotion regulation.

Personality traits are an organized set of almost fixed and stable characteristics that distinguish one person from another (6). A dimensional model of personality that examines deep and fundamental mechanisms within the psyche and examines this relationship in different periods of psychological development that has been damaged is the personality organization model, which is based on psychoanalytic theories and experiences. Clinical Otto Kernberg has been obtained (7). In his theory of personality organization, Kerenberg addressed the issue that the personality framework is a stable framework of internal subject relationships, which is a layered image of the personality organization that provides the possibility of dimensional grading of multiple areas of personality functioning. By presenting a self-report tool of personality structure, he has obtained a layered image of the degree and severity of personality vulnerability, and based on that, it is said that personality consists of several functional areas (3). The goal of Kerenberg's model is to gain more understanding about the organization of personality and to understand that such a model tries to explain the way a person relates to himself, others and the future by means of a psychoanalytical approach (8).

Commitment and acceptance therapy and intensive and short-term dynamic therapy can play an effective role in improving psychological symptoms; Therefore, the present study was conducted

with the aim of determining the effectiveness of commitment and acceptance therapy and intensive and short-term screening on personality organization, emotion regulation in women with tension headaches. In other words, the short-term intensive psychodynamic perspective is a function of Freud's psychoanalytic model, which was designed and developed by an Iranian scientist named Davanloo at McGill University, in which the long-term, psychoanalytic method has been transformed into a short-term, effective, organized and clear method. And in this treatment, patients are helped to adjust their anxiety and excitement and change their defenses, and with this change, the person becomes stronger and can face the emotions that he has avoided (14). In a recent meta-analysis review study, the efficacy of short-term dynamic psychotherapies was investigated in 13 clinical trial studies on bodybuilding disorders. The results of this research showed that short-term dynamic psychotherapies can be used as reliable treatment methods in bodybuilding disorders. In a research, Farzdi et al tested short-term and intensive psychodynamic psychotherapy and the results showed that short-term dynamic therapy Long and intense effects on people's mental health. (15); Therefore, this research was conducted with the aim of determining the effect of intensive and short-term dynamic psychotherapy and commitment and acceptance on the improvement of personality organization and emotion regulation in patients with tension-type headache.

#### **Research method:**

This study was a semi-experimental method with a pre-test, post-test and two-month follow-up plan with a control group. The target population was all patients with tension headaches who referred to the specialized neurology clinic in Tehran in 1402. The sample size was determined by referring to Cohen's table. In this way, at the confidence level of 95%, the effect size was 0.3 and the statistical power was 0.83 for each group of 12 people. However, since there was a possibility of some samples falling and also in order to generalize the results more, the sample size was determined to be 15 people in each group. In the first step, 45 people were selected by available sampling method, and in the second step, these 45 people were replaced in 3 experimental groups (15 people) and a control group (15 people) in a simple random way (by lottery). The criteria for entering the study include: full consent to participate in treatment sessions, not having any other disease other than tension headache (by asking the people participating in the research), education at least at the middle school level and above (in order to understand dynamic therapy), not taking drugs Neurological (such as fluoxetine and sertraline), lack of receiving psychological services (such as treatment for depression or anxiety) in the past three months, and lack of history of receiving short-term and intensive dynamic therapy training. The exclusion criteria included absence of more than two sessions, suffering from mental illnesses including depression, simultaneous participation in other psychological training workshops, and refusal to continue cooperation. Informed consent, justification of the participants regarding the method and purpose of the research, compliance with the principle of secrecy and confidentiality of the obtained information, the freedom of the participants to leave the study were among the ethical principles observed in this study. To collect data in addition to the demographic information form (including:

age, gender, education level and marital status) from the self-report questionnaires of the organization of personality and emotion regulation in 3 stages: pre-test (before training), post-test (after) training) and follow-up (2 months after the completion of the training) were used. Sampling was done in February 1401 and the intervention started from Farrudin 1402 and continued until the end of June, and the follow-up period was also carried out until the end of September. The participants in the research did not drop out and the trainings were provided free of charge. It should be noted that these people were informed that they can withdraw from this study and receive psychological services at any time. After the end of the study, the subjects of the control group received free psychological services by a clinical psychologist.

### **Findings:**

The results of the study indicated the effect of commitment and acceptance method and intensive and short-term dynamic psychotherapy on the dimensions of personality organization and emotion regulation in tension headache sufferers ( $P < 0.001$ ) and the effectiveness of both methods was similar. To compare the effectiveness of commitment and acceptance and intensive and short-term dynamic psychotherapy, two-way analysis of variance with repeated measures was used. Before conducting the test, its main assumptions were checked and confirmed. The normality of data distribution was checked using the Shapiro-Wilk test, and the values of this test for the score of emotion regulation and personality organization in all three stages of pre-test, post-test and follow-up were insignificant at the level of 0.05 ( $P > 0.05$ ) and this indicated the normality of data distribution in all three stages and in all three groups. In order to evaluate the homogeneity of the error covariance matrix, the Mauchly test was used. The result of this test showed that the assumption of sphericity in the data for both components of personality organization score ( $P = 0.536$ ,  $\chi^2 = 3.37$ ) and emotion regulation score ( $P = 0.064$ ,  $\chi^2 = 16.12$ ) was established. Levene's test also showed that the assumption of equality of variance of the groups was established ( $P > 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** According to the results, specialists active in the psycho-physical field, especially tension headaches, can consider the use of commitment and acceptance methods and intensive and short-term dynamic psychotherapy in the treatment of these people, along with other treatments. The findings of the research showed that intensive and short-term dynamic therapy has led to the improvement of tension headache patients in the emotion regulation index. The results of this research with the researches of Orvati Aziz (20), Cyranka et al. (21) and Knekt et al. (22). In the treatment to experience emotions, we "build the capacity of the ego" so that they do not use defense mechanisms in order not to experience negative emotions through defending. In fact, by building my capacity for the patient, we help him improve and we do this by bringing the patient closer to his feelings without using defense mechanisms. In fact, creating a feeling of mastery over emotions by challenging defenses in the treatment process improves the patient's condition and consequently improves his quality of life. The inability to regulate emotions is rooted in the early years of life and failure in the internalization process has the characteristic of "self-care" of parents. The ability of self-care is a psychological capacity and one of the functions of the ego. This capacity protects the person from harm and leads to the guarantee of survival. The self-care capacity includes the

ability to measure reality, judge, control, the presence of anxiety with the function of warning the person, and the ability to make logical conclusions and inferences. Self-care capacity is created through parent-child interaction and parental support and affection in the early years of childhood. Since people with tension headaches lack these internalizations, they have problems in self-care ability, maintaining self-esteem and regulating communication. In fact, failure in self-care and self-regulation causes painful and confusing feelings in the person and brings heavy psychological suffering to the person. In dynamic therapy, the person will be able to increase the self function and increase the emotion regulation for himself, and he will no longer need to use the non-adaptive behaviors that had the function for him, and the person can live more easily by nature. What happens in the process of short-term dynamic therapy is to become more aware of hidden unconscious feelings and emotions during the therapeutic relationship. Clients become aware of the inappropriateness of their emotional experiences and "I" are allowed to express themselves and adapt to changed situations. According to the obtained results, it is suggested that therapists and counselors learn the dynamic approach and use the short-term psychodynamic approach in dealing with tension headache patients. Also, other psychotherapeutic interventions should be evaluated in this society. It is suggested that other experts and researchers experiment with intensive and short-term psychodynamics with other variables in other communities.

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