

The Application of Drawing and painting to decrease the anxiety of the schizophrenic patients

abstract

Background: *People with schizophrenia continuous type (previously labeled as chronic), constitute the majority of inpatients in rehabilitation wards. These patients, apart from the characteristic signs and symptoms of schizophrenia, suffer from anxiety. This anxiety, not influenced by antipsychotic medications, can be a part of the schizophrenia per se, but it may be due to the unfavorable frame and quality of life in mental hospital wards. Every attempt in decreasing the anxiety of these patients, can be regarded as a step toward a more perfect treatment and rehabilitation plan, and elevating the quality of their lives. In this research the application of drawing and painting as a method to decrease the anxiety of these patients was evaluated.*

method: *100 schizophrenic patients (according to DSM-IV criteria) who were hospitalized in long stay rehabilitation wards of Razi psychiatric center for at least 2 years, entered the research procedure. Their anxiety level was measured by the Cattell anxiety questionnaire. 50 patients, who were selected as experimental group, had 15 one hour sessions of drawing and painting. For the remainder 50 patients who were the control group, various neutral activities (as placebo) were performed, during those hours. Medications were unchanged during the research. After the 15th session the anxiety levels of patients were evaluated for the second time. The scores obtained in the first and second evaluations in each group and between two groups were analyzed by appropriate statistical methods.*

Results: *In comparing the mean scores obtained from the first and second measurements in experimental group by applying the t-test (in correlated groups), the difference was statistically significant ($t=67.5$, $P<0.01$).*

Conclusion: *Sessions of drawing and painting with appropriate duration and frequency, can significantly diminish the anxiety in long stay schizophrenic patients in rehabilitation wards.*

Fadaei F. (M.D.)

Assist. prof. of psychiatry
university of welfare and
rehabilitation sciences

Jamnezhad M. (B.Sc.)

Mazinani R. (M.D.)

Assist. prof. of psychiatry
university of welfare and
rehabilitation sciences

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