The effect of learning (problem-solving skills, decision making and refusal skills) on reducing positive attitude tend of addicts in using drugs (Referrals to addiction treatment and rehabilitation centers)

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Abstract

Background: Drug addiction takes a lot of victims every year. Many efforts have taken place by relevant agencies in various countries as well as international organizations to reduce drug consumption and thereby reducing the numbers of addicts. Prevention of social damages requires preventive interventions along with an emphasis on teaching life skills. The aim of this study was to evaluate the effect of training (problem-solving skills, decision making and refusal skills) on reducing positive attitude tend of addicts in using drugs.

Methods: This study is an experimental research with pretest - posttest design with a control group and two experimental groups. The population consisted of all addicts voluntarily admitted in treatment center in 2014-2015. A sample of 60 was selected using simple random sampling.

Results: In the pre-test more addicts had positive attitude towards drug use. There is a significant difference between addict’s attitudes towards drug and the effects of drug abuse. Addict’s attitudes to the effects of drug use placed in the highest rating but towards the dangers of drug use placed in the lowest rating.

Conclusion: The findings shows that learning (problem-solving skills, decision making and refusal skills) have a positive impact on reducing tend of addicts in using drugs.

Keywords: addict’s attitude, problem solving skills, decision making skills, refusal skills.
Introduction:

Addiction is a chronic, progressive condition which characterized with features such as compulsive behaviors, uncontrolled craving, and investigative behavior towards drugs and continued consuming despite of harmful social, psychological, physical, familial and economic consequences (Dave; Gallo; Lukston, 2004). Nowadays drug abuse is one of the most tragic problems that have biological, psychological and social effects on the lives of many people. Long-term use of drugs not only has devastating impact on people's social and economic situation, but also plays a decisive role in all aspects of family life. (Masumimonfared et al.) (2014).

It seems that people in all cultures and times have tended to change their mental states by means of narcotics and psychotropic substances and this is leading to drug addiction. So drug abuse is considered as one of the main problems of human life and increasing in usage over the last century have had a great concern for all communities (Lundholm, 2013).

Positive attitude to drugs is so important that Albert Ellis believes that addicts thinking and attitude leads them to reuse drug or makes them taking away of it forever. Addicts' attitude towards the drug is kind of thinking that it might be reasonable or unreasonable and often it is spontaneous, unconscious and permanent. And this attitude cannot be easily changed. But one of the ways helps addicts to find knowledge about themselves is to study the type of attitude and to make negative attitude toward addiction. (Ellis, 2001).

Substance addiction has a severe impact not only on the individual, but those closest to them, and society as a whole. These impacts can be attributed to crime, disease, accidents, domestic violence, abuse, job loss, and homelessness. It is said that substance use causes one in four deaths and results in numerous economic and social consequences.

The aim of life skills training is to reduce people's motivation for using the drug and to reduce the vulnerability of the individual in social interaction, to upgrade resistance to peer groups' pressure as well as identification of difficult situations. The causes of tendency to drug abuse are including low self-esteem, lack of coping skills, lack of skills in communication and escape from problems. Since prevention is prior to treatment, it is important to design training courses for primary prevention. (Kaplan, 2001).

The aim of this study was to determine the effect of life skills training on the prevention of addiction. Since the life skills to enhance social -mental abilities and provide mental, physical and social health; life skills training that enables people to provide improve their knowledge, values and attitudes to actual abilities. So that everybody knows what to do and how to do. Life skills lead to motivation and healthy behavior. Also affects on the sense of self and also the others perception as well as increase the confidence. So on the whole, it is leading to increased mental health and prevents mental illness and has a great role on solving behavioral problems. (Kelinkeh, 1999).

There are several ways to cope with problems and emotions, without a tendency toward drug. Drug abuse is an escape that causes a false happiness. It could neither resolve the problem nor improve the relations. After attending the program people thought how to make decision, to be assertive, to put forward their demands and their overwhelming response to the demands of others. (Mohammad Khani, 2012)
Problem-solving skills are in the highest level of learning activities and for man important part of everyday life of each individual. (Rezai et al., 2014 quotes Najafi and Khorasani, 2015)

Drug addiction, is a chronic recurrent disease along with severe motivational problems and behavioral loss of control (Dallas and Dave, Julie, 2010). According to the UN Office for Combating Drugs and Crime in 2012, In 2010 about 230 million people worldwide including 5 per cent of population over 18 years used drugs, millions of them are drug dependent. In recent years, the trend of illegal substance use has been stable, although some developing countries, show increase in the amount of use. (World drug Report, 2012)

For various reasons, including cultural, social and economic, substance abuse attracted more attentions rather than the other high-risk behaviors. Drug trade is one of the most profitable businesses in the world in spite of being forbidden sales and consumption in almost all countries (Danaee, 2015)

Botvin et al (2002) in a study reviewed the research results of two past decades and came to the conclusion that life skills training approach had consistently positive behavioral effects on alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse. It has been observed that life skills training in addition to its proactive role in the use of drugs and alcohol can make profound effects on one's life.

Zollinger et al (2003) studied the Impact of knowledge-based life skills training on Hindi school students attitudes towards smoking. A comparison of the experimental and control groups showed that students who had completed the training course (experimental group) significantly smoked lesser than students who did not have such training (control group). Moreover, trained students could more easily reject the peers' offer to smoke. They also decided to stop smoking continuously.

**Research method:**

This field trial study was conducted using pretest - posttest design with two control groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>by accident</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>independent variable</th>
<th>post-test</th>
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<tr>
<td>R:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>E1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E2</td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>X2</td>
<td>T2</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>T1</td>
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<td>T2</td>
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</table>

The population consisted of all addicts voluntarily admitted treatment center in 2014-2015. Because of continuous measurement scales and two-tailed hypothesis a sample of 60 was selected using simple random sampling and formula.

First of all, a questionnaire determined addict's attitude towards drug. Among who determined at the average level and above, 60 people were selected using simple sampling. They were divided into 3 groups. Then draw two groups as experimental groups and the third group as the control group.
Data were collected using a 40 question questionnaire. Every question had 5 choices to determine 3 items including: using drugs, drug abuse effects and attitude towards drugs. Each statement has a 5-point Likert scale answers (strongly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree and strongly agree) (Delaware, 2010).

Skills (problem solving, decision making and assertiveness) were provided to individuals during twelve 1/5 hour sessions. Psychology and psychometrics experts studied and revised the questionnaire. Reliability for various items was obtained for a 40 randomly selected samples using Cronbach's alpha. These coefficients are shown in table 1. These coefficients show internal consistency of the questionnaire as an indicator to evaluate the reliability and validity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All</th>
<th>Attitude to drug test</th>
<th>Index</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tend to be drug</td>
<td>drug risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0/89</td>
<td>0/85</td>
<td>0/90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's alpha</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As you can be seen the scale of attitude to drugs has acceptable and satisfactory reliability.

Data were analyzed by the use of descriptive and analytical analyses such as frequency, mean, standard deviation, t-tests and Friedman test.

To determine addicts' attitude towards drug, in pre-test the frequency and percentage of the sample group in five categories from strongly agree to strongly disagree levels were calculated as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency distribution and percentage of participants' attitude to the effects of drug abuse (pre-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>no idea</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>quite agree</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>%100</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>25/2</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>882</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attitude towards drug addicts
As can be seen, in the pre-test most people have a positive attitude towards drugs. To determine the rank and prioritize the components of attitudes toward drug Friedman test was used as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Comparison of attitudes toward drugs in terms of components in the pre-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Friedman test</th>
<th>Mean Effect</th>
<th>Tend</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>1/69</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>Fridman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen there are significant differences among the components of attitudes toward drugs. Attitudes toward drug effects are in the highest rank and their attitude towards the dangers of drugs is in the lowest rank.

A summary of results are presented in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4: Comparison of attitudes toward drugs based on independent t test of pre-test and post-test scores in the first experimental group and control group

As could be seen, there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups. Trained addicts' attitude towards the use of drug is significantly lower than who have not received this training.

Table 5: Comparison of attitudes toward drugs based on independent t test of pre-test and post-test scores in the second experimental group and control group
As can be seen in Table 5, there is a significant difference between mean scores in pre-test and post-test for experimental group and control group. Trained addicts' attitude towards the use of drugs is significantly lower than who have not received this training.

**Conclusion:**

The findings of this study showed that more addicts in pre-test had positive attitude towards drug use. As can be seen there are significant differences among the components of attitudes toward drugs. Attitudes toward drug effects are in the highest rank and their attitude towards the dangers of drugs is in the lowest rank.

In general, drug sellers try to create a positive attitude towards the drugs in people to make a good market for themselves. Unfortunately, there isn't a strong negative attitude to drugs in particular in teenagers and youngsters. One of the fundamental causes of addiction is the risk of normalization of drug use and a positive attitude to the drug and its effects. In addition, in some celebrations and parties even funeral events drug is seen as a sign of distinction and dignity of the host. Now this myth is common among young people and of course having such attitudes lead to increasingly drug use among these groups (Abadinsky, 2005). Ellis it is essential to study people believes to understand, control and predict human behavior, because the attitude either directly or indirectly affect the behavior. So there is always the possibility that to change people's positive attitudes and strengthen negative attitude towards drugs can change their behavior. (Ellis, 2001).

Drug abuse is one of the most important psychological - social problems which has harmful effects on the individual, family, society and culture, and is a new obstacle to human growth and development.

The disease spread in the community for many reasons and biological, psychological, social, economic, political and cultural factors have role in this problem. Today, addiction is a public health problem throughout the world. (Berberian, 2001)

The statistics published by international organizations, especially the World Health Organization International Narcotics Control Committee and UNESCO indicated an increasing trend of drug abuse globally. In this case, the only visible difference is related to age groups and their consumption pattern. Aggravation of such a trend could damage psychological, ethical, economic, and social grounds of a community. Such a process could affect on productive forces of the country's future, i.e. adolescents and young adults (Akbari, 2007).

Ellis believes that one of the ways that helps the addicts to recognize themselves, is to study the type of attitude and to create negative attitude towards substance abuse.
Jajary's Research results (2007) indicate that most of addicts refer to addiction centers in Mashhad, have a positive attitude to the effects of drug use. The results of his study are consistent with the present study.

The findings of this study showed that trained addicts' attitude towards the use of drug is significantly lower than who have not received this training.

Detoxification of drug addicts is an inevitable necessity. But suffice to it, and the lack of treatment through psychological treatment, will have frustrated these measures (Jajary, 2007)

Conner and Abraham (2001) in their study showed that problem-solving skill as problem-focused coping strategy is the most useful and most effective coping response.

Problem-solving skills and decision-making skills through could lead to identify high-risk conditions, conditions that make addicts to drug use, so addict could find more effective way to adapt to them.

Zollinger et al (2003) showed that students who have participated in life skills training program compared to those who have not participated, had less smoking. Findings of this study are consistent with Zollinger findings.

Carson (2003) showed that life skills training are effective for at-risk groups. Findings of this study are consistent with his findings.

Botvin and Gilber(2002) on the effect of life skills training on reducing smoking, alcohol and drugs in high schools of the United States, showed that the implementation of this program was created a reduction of 40% to 80% of smoking, drugs and alcohol. The results of this study are consistent with their findings.

Mott and HaurinIn their study showed that general trends in the prevention of substance abuse (including life skills training to promote social abilities) are more effective than trends based on knowledge and information as well as trends based on peer leadership.

Holi field (2002) showed that problem-solving skill is a useful behavioral - cognitive therapy for changing addicts' attitudes towards the use of drug.

Brown, Richard et al (2001) in their study found that teaching problem-solving skills and decision-making makes the addicts not to seek drug but answer to high-risk conditions without drugs.

Nilsson (2003) showed those communication skills, decision making and problem solving skills, significantly reduced smoking, alcohol and other drug use. The results of this study are consistent with his findings.

Marilyn (2005) showed that life skills training are effective in preventing drug use. The results of this study are consistent with his results.

Gentry (2003) showed that the rate of drug use among who had received life skills training was significantly lower than the control group.
Taremian (2007) showed that training courses were effective in reducing the tendency to addiction and changing addicts' attitude.

By reviewing the literature, we can conclude that addicts in problematic situations use more inefficient methods of problem-solving. Problem-solving skills, decision making and refusal skills are knowledge-based and suitable coping process that could increase abilities to cope with stressful situations.

Watson et al (2006) showed that problem-solving skills are the most important thinking processes that help addicts to deal effectively with the problems and challenges of life.

Bagheri, and Bahrami (2007) concluded that the decision-making and problem-solving strategies are effective to reduce addicts' attitude towards the effects, risks and willingness to use drugs. The findings of this study are consistent with their results.

**Recommendations based on the findings:**

1) Considering addicts statistics, it is recommended that enterprises and institutions concerned with addiction be more serious in this field and be extremely active on the prevention and treatment of relapse in patients. Interventions are essential to do effective and fruitful actions in this regard.

2) The results of this study showed that problem-solving and decision-making skills and determination to say "no" are effective to change the addicts' attitude to the effects, risks and willingness to use drugs.

3) Providing comprehensive and applied training program consistence to characteristics and needs of individuals and the society’s culture in which the needs of different groups of teenagers and youths, parents and peer groups, etc. are scientifically included in various fields.

4) Providing consultancy services to all family members of the addict, in order to complete the process of addiction treatment.

5) Considering the increasing damage and the consequences of addiction for different groups and segments of the society, it is suggested that the government provide financial support for the researchers such as laboratories, research centers and counseling centers to study various aspects of drug addiction in schools, organizations, offices and…to enact the necessary, on time preventive measures prior to the occurrence and spread of drug addiction among different groups of society.

**Research limitations:**

1) The present research has done based on questionnaires only, we think it is better doing studies using interviews too.

2) identifying and dividing the subjects into experimental and control groups and the implementation of training courses have been conducted only in the addiction treatment
centers, and most of these people almost feel and express being isolated from the community.
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