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Sensation Seeking and marital adjustment in handicapped veterans suffering from PTSD

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Abstract

The aim of present research was to investigate sensation seeking and marital satisfaction in handicapped veterans suffering from PTSD and their wives. For this reason, a sample of 280 cases of Tehran city Handicapped Veterans suffering from PTSD have been selected. sensation seeking scale (SSS-Form V) and marital satisfaction questionnaire were used for collecting of data. Results showed that there was negative relationship between sensation seeking and marital satisfaction in handicapped veterans suffering from PTSD and also in their wives. As well, result of t test for comparing of marital satisfaction in matched and non-matched couples in sensation seeking showed that there was significant difference between two groups. Regression analyses sensation seeking of veterans significantly predict marital satisfaction ($\beta=-.728$ and $t=-9.55$). we can conclude that sensation seeking in high extent influences couple’s problems and marital satisfaction in handicapped veterans suffering from PTSD.

Key word: sensation seeking; marital satisfaction; handicapped veterans; PTSD.

1. Introduction

Most individuals will experience one or more traumatic events during their lifetime. In the aftermath of a traumatic event, it is typical for an individual to experience a myriad of symptoms such as intrusive thoughts about the trauma, avoidance of trauma related stimuli, hyperarousal, and general numbing (APA, 2000). handicapped veterans that suffering from PTSD have many problem in their relationship. Previous researches showed that sensation seeking is important factor in marital satisfaction. handicapped veterans with high level of sensation seeking have many problem in their relationship. Previous researches showed that sensation seeking is important factor in marital satisfaction. Sensation seeking has been defined as "the need for varied, novel and complex sensations and experiences, and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experience" (Zuckerman,
The Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS) was developed by Zuckerman, Eysenck and Eysenck (1978) to measure individual differences in sensation seeking or level of arousal. On the basis of factor analysis applied to an earlier version of SSS, Form V was constructed and consists of four different scales (factors). Marital adjustment is the adaptation of a husband and wife that allows the couple to avoid or sufficiently resolve conflicts so that both people feel satisfied with the marriage and each other (Locke, 1968). Many factors influence a successful marital adjustment. Among them, sensation seeking have been a target of research. Only a handful of studies have been reported in the literature on the relationship between the trait of sensation seeking and marital satisfaction. Farley and Davis (1977) and Farley and Mueller (1978) report significant positive correlations between SSS scores of husbands and wives: high sensation seekers tend to marry other highs and low sensation seekers tend to marry other lows. Ficher, Zuckerman and Neeb (1981) found that couples seeking therapy for marital problems had a lower correlation on the SSS total score than a matched control group of spouses. In addition, two unpublished dissertations were concerned with marital satisfaction and sensation seeking. Schubert (1984) reported that if the couples were mismatched on SSS scores they had problems in their marriage. However, Ewing (1985) failed to find any significant relationship between similarity or dissimilarity in sensation seeking scores and increased marital adjustment.

The major purposes of the present study was to investigate:
1) Relationship between sensation seeking and marital satisfaction in handicapped veterans suffering from PTSD.
2) relationship between sensation seeking and marital satisfaction in wives of handicapped veterans suffering from PTSD.
3) Relationship between marital satisfaction and percentage of veterans risk taking in the war.
4) comparing of marital satisfaction in matched and non-matched couples (handicapped veterans suffering from PTSD and their wives) in sensation seeking.
5) Predicting of marital satisfaction by sensation seeking.

2. Method

2.1. Sample
The statistical population of this research includes the male handicapped veterans living in Tehran province in 2009 suffering from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). In the current research, taking into consideration the difficulty of the selection of the research sample, the available sampling method and non-random method have been used and 80 individuals from among the handicapped veterans in the city of Tehran have been selected as samples of the research.

2.2. Data collection instrument
Marital satisfaction: The Marital Adjustment Test (MAT [45]; is one of the most frequently used measures of marital adjustment [64, 65]. This 15-item questionnaire measures marital satisfaction and degree of agreement on several themes related to everyday marital life. Higher scores indicate better levels of satisfaction and adjustment. This instrument has a high internal consistency and test-retest reliability [45], good concurrent validity (r¼0.86) with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale [66], and excellent validity in terms of discriminating between satisfied and dissatisfied couples [67].

The SSS Form V.: The SSS Form V was derived from factor analysis of the SSS Form IV in a large heterogeneous sample of English twins of both sexes (Zuckerman et al., 1978). Form V contains 10 items representing each of the four subscales: TAS, ES, DIS, and BS. There is no overlap between the items of the subscales. Three-week test-retest reliabilities of these four subscales have been reported to range from .70 to .94, and internal consistency reliabilities from .56 to .82 (Zuckerman, 1979). In addition to the four subscales, Form V includes a Total score to measure a broad sensation seeking trait (Zuckerman, 1979).

2.3. Data analysis
After the application process, the analysis of the findings was done by using the mean description index, standard deviation, Pearson’s coefficient correlation and the independent T test. Pearson’s coefficient correlation(r) was used to find a relation between sensation seeking and marital satisfaction in the handicapped veterans and their wives and the independent T test was used for studying the differences between the matched and non-matched couples as far as sensation seeking in marital satisfaction is related.
4. Results

Table 1. Relationship between sensation seeking and marital satisfaction in handicapped veterans suffering from PTSD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>Marital satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensation seeking</td>
<td>-0.74*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P<0.01  
As you can see in table 1, there is a significant negative correlation (r=-0.74 and p=0.01) between sensation seeking and the rate of marital satisfaction in handicapped veterans who suffer from PTSD. Based on this, we can conclude that as the sensation seeking increases, the rate of marital satisfaction in handicapped veterans who suffer from PTSD decreases. The determination coefficient of $r^2 = 0.054$ indicates that these two components (marital satisfaction and sensation seeking in the handicapped veterans suffering from PTSD) have a common variance of 54%.

Table 2. Relationship between sensation seeking and marital satisfaction in wives of handicapped veterans suffering from PTSD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>Marital satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensation seeking</td>
<td>-0.49*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P<0.01  
As you can see in table 2, there is a significant negative correlation (r=-0.49 and p=0.01) between sensation seeking and the rate of marital satisfaction in wives. Based on this, we can conclude that as the sensation seeking increases, the rate of marital satisfaction in wives decreases. The determination coefficient of $r^2 = 0.24$ indicates that these two components (marital satisfaction and sensation seeking in the handicapped veterans suffering from PTSD) have a common variance of 24%.

Table 3. Relationship between marital satisfaction and percentage of veterans risk taking in the war

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>Marital satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>veterans percentage rat</td>
<td>-0.33**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P<0.001  
As you can see in table 3, there is a negative correlation (r=-0.33 and p=0.001) between the rate of marital satisfaction in handicapped veterans who are suffering from PTSD and the percentage of their risk taking in the war. The determination coefficient of $r^2 = 0.010$ indicates that sensation seeking and risk taking in the war at the rate of 10% have a common variance.

In order to test this theory that "marital satisfaction between matched and non-matched couples from the sensation seeking point of view is different", the mean scores of marital satisfaction among those men who had a difference of 5 points and more with their wives from the sensation seeking point of view with the mean marital satisfaction among men who were matched to their wives from the sensation seeking point of view (That means that there was no difference or it was less than 5 points.) using the T test for the independent groups were compared together.

Table 4. t test for comparing of marital satisfaction in matched and non-matched couples in sensation seeking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>couples</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>matched</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>113/10</td>
<td>14/62</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3/92</td>
<td>0/001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As you can see in table 4, from the marital satisfaction point of view (T=3/92 and p= 0.001) between the two matched and non-matched groups of male handicapped veterans, there is a significant difference as far as the sensation seeking with their wives is related. If we look at the variable means in marital satisfaction, we can conclude that matched couples have more marital satisfaction compared to the non-matched ones.

Table 5. Regression analyses for predicting of marital satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SEB</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensation seeking of veterans</td>
<td>-4/05</td>
<td>0/424</td>
<td>-0/728</td>
<td>-9/55</td>
<td>0/001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital satisfaction of wives</td>
<td>0/460</td>
<td>0/117</td>
<td>0/313</td>
<td>3/94</td>
<td>0/001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see in table 5 sensation seeking of veterans significantly predict marital satisfaction (β=-/728 and t=-9/55). Therefore sensation seeking of veterans is important factor in marital satisfaction of their wives.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The findings of this research showed that on the one hand there is a negative and significant correlation between the sensation seeking and the rate of marital satisfaction among the handicapped veterans who are suffering from PTSD and on the other hand between the level of sensation seeking among the wives of handicapped veterans who are suffering from PTSD and their level of marital satisfaction there is a negative and significant correlation and sensation seeking of veterans significantly predict marital satisfaction. That means that the more the sensation seeking of the handicapped veterans and their wives increases, the lower the rate of their marital satisfaction will be. And the couple will have more problems. These findings are in line with the findings of Gibson, and et al. (1992), Rebecca & Anna (2003) and Ann(2007). These researchers reached the conclusion in their findings that between sensation seeking of high level and congeniality, in general, and the marital satisfaction, in particular, there is a negative correlation. Taking into consideration the fact that their thrill seekers have a natural and internal need to increase their stimulus, this can be a determining factor in selecting a wife or a life style. (Merrens & Branningan, 2000). Marriage is a kind of obligation that can limit an individual's choice and it is possible for the environment not to be in conformity with the sensation seeking person. Under such circumstances, the individual will feel the tension and marriage congeniality will be endangered.

One of the findings of this research is that there is a negative and significant correlation between marital satisfaction and the percentage of taking risks in the war and the finding is in correspondence with the results of the research done by Farley and Nelson (1999) Harris & Blaskey (2007). As it was stated by Shapiro et al (2003) and Adler- Baeder (2007), negative sensations such as anger and hate can be influential in decreasing the marital satisfaction. Handicapped veterans as it is known, because of a long term physical and emotional damages, suffer from emotions such as anger, hate and depression. Such problems can have a negative impact on their marital satisfaction.

The decrease in marital satisfaction could also have been resulted from long term and permanent problems which were because of the husband's physical and emotional damages. The research done by Coombs (2008) indicates that there is a correlation between marital satisfaction and physical health. That means that the couples' physical health can make life more pleasant and allow them to live longer and be more satisfied of each other.

Therefore, physical and emotional handicaps can, sometimes, have negative and serious impact on the couples' relations and their marital satisfaction. In this case, the couples can find the suitable solutions by being patient and going to marriage counselors.

Another finding of this research indicates that there is a significant difference in the marital satisfaction as far as the sensation seeking with the wives between the two matched and non-matched groups of handicapped veterans is concerned. That means that the handicapped veterans who were matched to their wives as far as sensation seeking is related, they had more marital satisfaction compared to the handicapped veterans who were similar to
their wives as far as sensation seeking is concerned. This finding is in line with the theory and the research of Addington (2001) who believes that individuals having similar personalities will be more attractive to each other and, ultimately, they marry those who are similar to them. In the view of Wiggins, Wiggins & Zanden (2004) similarity can be instrumental in bringing significant relations between a couple and being aware of similarity can be rewarding because the individual feels that his ideas are acceptable and he can live in harmony with his wife and their friendship grows rapidly.

Taking into consideration the fact that this research exclusively deals with the correlation between sensation seeking and the marital satisfaction among the handicapped veterans and their peers we can not analyze its cause and effect. Therefore, it is recommended that the researchers, in future, longitudinally, research the role of sensation seeking in the marital satisfaction of handicapped veterans in order to reach conclusions that are more definite. The findings of this research can be used in pre-marital counseling and couple therapy.

References


