Abstract

The present research studies the relation between social capital and mental health among a female group in Tehran. Accordingly, 200 females, who were referred to cultural centres of Tehran’s municipality, were chosen to participate in this research volunteer. The questionnaires that are used in this study are as follows: family supports, social capitals and mental health. This research is descriptive and correlation is used in it. Results show that, those women who have more access to educational, career and family support in economic, intellectual and emotional fields have a higher mental health. Also, results of regression show that, family supports and social capitals play an important role in estimation of women’s level of mental health.

Key words: Social Capitals, Family Supports, Mental Health

1. Introduction

As an external source, social family supports, having a job, high level of education and social capital can reduce the effects caused by stress, and can help individuals to deal effectively with stress and to increase their mental health. (Tiwari et al., 2007)

Those women who have economic, career and educational power, and who have access to supportive family sources in intellectual, emotional and economic fields and social supportive resources, face with issues and problems of life in a more rational way. They also have higher decision making power in family issues, and in fact, this set of reasons helps a lot in maintaining and upgrading of women’s mental health. (Khosravi et al., 2008)

Coker (2002) shows that, social family supports, especially for those who are more fragile in facing pressures (like widows and victims of family violence), can reduce psychological pressures in crisis periods. Social family supports not only have mental and social benefits, but also reduce the rate of physical illnesses and provide the possibility of improvement and return of the individual to his or her normal life.

Zuo et al., (2005) have ended to this conclusion in their research that access of women to social capitals has changed their roles directly in process of family life and has improved their status in their family life.

Research of Khosravi et al., (2003) shows that, employment with income is beneficial for mental health of women without children and of those who are above the age of forty years. Also, being employed along with high educational levels leads to increase of social support, which in total, social family support with having a job and high level of education have a significant role in women’s mental health protection.
Donnelly et al., (1999) believe that, family and social supports, career supports and high level of education have a negative relation with stress and depression, and that decrease of these supports is effective in psychological incompatibilities. Moreover, social capitals are the factors that can be effective on women’s mental health, and they can lead women to higher self-esteem and liberal attitudes.

Huang (2005) shows that, women’s employment not only brings economic independence, feeling of efficiency, self-esteem, supportive atmosphere and social relations, but also it can reduce the influence of many types of stress and women’s family life problems.

**Research Hypotheses**
1- There is a relation between women’s mental health and social capitals.
2- There is a relation between mental health and family supports.
3- Social capitals and family supports have a major impact on estimation of women’s mental health.

**2. Method**

Method of this research is descriptive and in a more precise way it is of correlation. Method of sampling of this research is as an available sample, which contains 200 females, who were referred to cultural centres of Tehran’s municipality. They were chosen to participate in this research voluntary.

**2.1. Instruments**

A- Social Capital and Family Supports Questionnaire

This questionnaire is contained of two parts:
1- Perceived social supports questionnaire

This questionnaire, which is made by the researcher, is used to measure women’s level of real perceived family support and is based on research background, attitudes and research findings in relation to women’s mental health. This test contains 4 questions and answers have 5 options: I completely agree, I agree, neutral, I disagree, I completely disagree. Also, reliability coefficient of the questionnaire in the present research is 0.80.

2- Communications Network Questionnaire

This questionnaire is made by the researcher, and contains 4 questions related to membership of individuals in social networking and is grading same as perceived social support questionnaire. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient obtained in the present research for this questionnaire is 0.74. Also, demographical information such as level of education and employment is collected in this part.

B- Mental Health Questionnaire

In this research, form of 28 questions related to mental health questionnaire that was prepared by Goldberg in 1979 is used. This questionnaire contains 4 subsets as follows: physical symptoms, stress, social action and depression. Each subset has 7 questions, and grading is based on 5 point Lickert-type response scale, and the least number for each question is zero and the highest is 3.

In Iran, Houman (1997) has studies the Iranian sample, and reported 0.84 for the internal cohesion of the questionnaire, with the use of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient obtained in the present research for mental health questionnaire is 0.81.

**Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Problems</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Stress</th>
<th>Physical Symptoms</th>
<th>Social Functioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Supports</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of the above table show that, there is significant negative correlation between social capital, family supports and score of psychological problems and all its’ subsets. It should be mentioned that, as much as the
answerer gets a lower score in mental health questionnaire, it means that she has a better mental health, and high score shows psychological problems.

<p>| Table II. Multiple Regression between Social Capital, Family Supports and Mental Health |
|------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression Equation</th>
<th>Non-standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard Coefficients</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R²</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Supports</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Supports and</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capitals</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is seen in the above table, after calculation of stepwise regression of social capital, family supports and mental health, family supports alone have estimated 0.15 of the variance in the dependent variable which is mental health, and in the second step, both family supports and social capitals have estimated 0.17 for mental health.

Conclusion

It was estimated that there is a relation between women’s mental health, social capitals and family supports. Results of the present research show that there is a positive relation between women’s mental health, social capitals and family support, and as women’s access gets more in social capitals, it shows that they have a higher mental health, because social capitals will increase self-esteem, self-control, correct and timely decision making in dealing with problems and issues related to family life and personal life. Also, this finding is match with findings of Raghavan et al., (2005). It is shown in their research that social capitals are considered as one of the main determinants in maintaining and upgrading women’s mental health. Also, family supports in confrontation with obstacles and problems can reduce effects of stress, and can act as a source that the individual can count on it.

As results show, family supports and social capitals have the potential of estimation of individual’s mental health. Existence of these supports, especially family supports, helps the individual to have less stress and anxiety in confrontation with social and family problems, to find solutions for them, and to use suitable solutions in solving the problems. Thus, having such abilities will help the maintaining and upgrading of mental health in individuals.

References


Hooman, Abbas. 1997. Reliability and Validity of Goldberg’s Public Health Questionnaire. Master dissertation, University of Tarbiat Moallem Tehran, Iran. [In Persian]


