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## Studying the relationship between sexual disorder and marriage satisfaction in those suffering from depression

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### Abstract

The goal of this research is to study the relationship of sexual function disorder and marital satisfaction of depressed people. We selected 60 depressed people as our sample. Enrich and Laumann were done to test our hypotheses. To analyze data used Pearson correlation coefficient, t-test. Findings showed that 34 (%63) had sexual function disability in excitatory phase and sexual desire of 26 was lower than normal. Marital satisfaction of depressed people without sexual function and depressed with lower than normal sexual desire was meaningfully low.

These findings showed that marital satisfaction in depressed who had sexual function disorder were lower than other depressed people.

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*Keywords:* sexual function – satisfaction - depression

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### 1. Introduction

Love and sexuality usually are mixed in healthy people, however these two concepts are totally different and identifying them with each other is not permitted. Still we are obliged to admit that these two concepts are mixed in the life of healthy individuals. Dondelly Dennis, 1993, writes in *Sexual Psychology*, “Though sexual impulses and love bear different results, they are complementary. In an adult individual, there is inseparable mixture of sexuality and love.”

Most researches seeking to study whether satisfaction in sexual relationship leads to marriage satisfaction or not, believe in more than one factor in marriage satisfaction (Linda and Antanosy, 1994).

In a longitudinal research studying emotional relationships, sexual desire, negativism and marital satisfaction, 106 couples who were married for more than two years are interviewed. The result indicated that women’s sexual desire is related to their husbands’ satisfaction but sexual affection was not generally correlated to their husbands’ marriage satisfaction.

The researchers believe that the significance of sexual affairs in marriage satisfaction is not the same in different stages of married life. The researches indicate that sexual affairs are at first rank in a married life. Sexual adjustment

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is one of the most important factors in a happy married life, so that sexual relationships that are not satisfactory and perfect may lead to dissatisfaction, conflict and even family disintegration. (Bampord, 1994, Goldberg and Ester Brook 2001, Huston and Vengelisti 2005).

“Marriage satisfaction is the correspondence between the existing situation and the ideal one” (Vinch, et al as quoted by Salmanian, 1994). According to this definition marriage satisfaction exists when the individual’s present situation corresponds with ones ideal situation and vice versa. “There are different definitions of marriage satisfaction which the best one is that of Hakniz’s” (Alice, 1994 quotes Salmanian, 1994). He defines marriage satisfaction in this way: “satisfaction and enjoyment experienced by either spouse while he or she considers all aspects of his or her conjugal life”.

Satisfaction is an attitudinal variant and therefore an individual characteristic of wife or husband. According to the above definition, marriage satisfaction is in fact the couple’s positive attitude to different aspects of their conjugal relationships, while dissatisfaction in marriage is a negative attitude to these aspects (Hanson and Venjelish, 2003).

Principally when marital satisfaction is the result of rewarding behaviors, then dissatisfaction would be the result of two partners’ annoyance of something. It is obvious of course that individuals’ idea about the nature of satisfactory things may change due to passage of time and human natural growth. A twenty years old couple may find a relationship satisfactory but in 40s due to the new interests and jobs, find it not so. A fiancée who was once the best choice may become unsatisfactory in case that better and more beautiful fiancées appear. It is also possible that satisfaction with the partner decreases by beginning life and getting aware of the spouse’s deficiencies.

Depression treatment needs some specific disciplinary behavior which their performance depends on an appropriate support from the family (Nelson, 2001). Family support of diabetes patients is relative to quality development of their nursing (Cleen and Life, 1996). Support from the spouse is recognized as the most important source of support for one infected by chronic diseases (Mouse, 1998). Importance and the necessity of paying attention to family are strongly emphasized in treatment attitudes to depression.

Sexual disorder is more common among diabetes patients compared with regular people. This disorder is observed in both sexes. The disorder also has a relation with life quality of the depressed. Among different kinds of sexual disorders including sexual aversion disorder, sexual arousal disorder, and orgasmic disorder, the second one is reported among 2/4 of depressed patients (Beyrami Mansour, 1999). Sexual arousal disorder among the depressed is three times than the public. One research indicates that the most common sexual disorder among depressed women is arousal disorder (Dadsetan Parirokh, 1999). Sexual aversion disorder is also very common among the depressed. This amount among the depressed women is reported to be 70% (Bradshaw John, 1993).

Although marital satisfaction and sexual behavior in individuals infected by depression is unsatisfactory, the relation between sexual disorder and marital dissatisfaction in the depressed is still under question. This research is an attempt to answer this.

## Methodology

The methodology used in this research, considering the nature of the subject, is descriptive or correlational non experimental. Statistical universe in this research consists of those depressed couples who refer to *Moshavereh Novin Center* (that is a psychological clinic) in *Tehran* (the capital of Iran) by the year 2010. The sample in this research is consistent of 60 patients affected by depression including 30 women and 30 men.

## Research Tools

**ENRICH Questionnaire** (questionnaire of marital satisfaction): ENRICH questionnaire is used for evaluating the potential problematizing fields or identifying the strong aspects and enhancing marital relation. This questionnaire is also useful in determining those couples in need of counseling and developing their relations. Moreover this questionnaire has been used as an authentic tool in many researches on studying marital satisfaction.

The validity of this test accomplished using alpha coefficient method by Olson et al ,1989, is reported 93% and in Mahdavian’s research, Pierson’s correlation coefficient in retest method (with one week interval) was reported 97.3% for men and 99.4% for women and 94% for both men and women. Correlation coefficient of this questionnaire is 92%. Correlation coefficient of marital satisfaction ranging from 41% to 60% distinguishes satisfied couples from unsatisfied ones. This indicates the reliability of this questionnaire.

**Lauman Questionnaire:** this questionnaire has been used in other researches in Iran in order to evaluate sexual disorder. This research evaluates sexual aversion disorder and sexual arousal disorder in samples using this questionnaire. The validity of this test accomplished through alpha coefficient is reported by Soleymanian, 1994, to be 92%.

### Statistical Analysis

For analyzing the data, Pierson's correlation coefficient and t - test were accomplished. The data was analyzed using spss program.

### Findings

One of the present research's objectives was studying the relationship between sexual behavior and marital satisfaction among the depressed and for doing so; Pierson's correlation coefficient was used.

Sexual Disorders: Among 60 depressed, 34 were infected by sexual disability and 26 by sexual arousal desire.

The average point of Enrich questionnaire in people with sexual arousal disorder was more than healthy people ( $p=0.023$ ).

Marital satisfaction and sexual disorders: The average point of enrich questionnaire in people with sexual aversion disorder was more than normal reduction of sexual desire ( $p=0.035$ ).

### Results and discussion

As the present research studies the relation between sexual disorder and marital satisfaction in the depressed, questionnaires appropriate for each one are offered and the collected data is calculated statistically. Regarding the findings of the research, sexual disorder is meaningfully more common among the depressed and also marital satisfaction of the depressed is meaningfully less than the healthy ones. The present research is accomplished to study the accuracy of this hypothesis that there is a meaningful correlation between sexual disorder and marital dissatisfaction in the depressed and the accuracy of the above hypothesis was confirmed.

CBT treatment in many people infected by depression and reduction of sexual desire, resulted in improvement of marital relationships (Bradshaw, John, 1993).

In a research, marital satisfaction value in people infected by sexual disorder was reported inappropriate in comparison with the healthy ones. Sexual treatment of those couples having family problems, led to improvement of marital relationships. It is also reported that the improvement of sexual relationship leads to improvement of marital condition and treatment of sexual desire leads to improvement of marital satisfaction (Seyf, Susan 1368). Reducing conflicts in couples is recognized as one of stage in the process of treatment of sexual disorder (Seyf, Susan, 1368). Vajinismus treatment in women also leads to improvement of marital satisfaction.

Studying the couples infected by sexual disorder, Hartman in 1980 showed that sexual disorder is different from conjugal conflicts.

Based on the findings of this research and considering the unique function of family in providing an appropriate condition for raising the children and appropriate control of depression to improve marital relationship, considering the correlation between marital satisfaction and sexual function is necessary. The psychologists are recommended to pay more attention to improvement of marital satisfaction of the patients in treatment of depression.

The students and researchers, who are going to study the relationship between sexuality and marital satisfaction in Iran, are recommended to provide a questionnaire including culture, religion and nationality of the statistical universe.

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