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## The Effectiveness of Systemic Family Therapy on Alexithymia, Psychological Capital, and Mental Vitality in Mothers Infected with COVID-19 with Autistic Children

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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The statement "Although all family members of a child with special needs experience psychological stress mothers as primary caregivers encounter higher levels of psychological pressure" should include a citation to support the claim that mothers experience higher levels of psychological pressure.

When discussing alexithymia, the sentence "Alexithymia is characterized by difficulty in emotional self-regulation or the inability to cognitively process emotional information and regulate emotions" should include references for definitions and explanations.

The description of psychological capital is well-done, but the sentence "Psychological capital includes an individual's perception of self and acts as a potential factor combining four interrelated perceptual-cognitive components" would benefit from an example or further explanation of how these components interact.

The inclusion criteria are specific, but the exclusion criteria such as "absence from more than two group therapy sessions" should be justified with a rationale for why this would exclude a participant.

The description of the therapy sessions is thorough. However, the protocol source "Bowen's (2009) protocol" should be referenced with a full citation to the original source for readers to verify and understand the therapy framework used.

The sentence "The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were assessed in a study by Bahadari Khosrowshahi et al. (2012)" should provide more detail on the specific validity and reliability metrics obtained.

When describing the TAS-20, the sentence "The concurrent validity of the TAS was confirmed by correlations with measures of emotional intelligence psychological well-being and psychological distress" should specify the correlation coefficients and the studies that confirmed these correlations.

The sentence "Rashwanlou et al. (2018) found internal consistency and item discrimination between 0.32 and 0.81" should clarify what these values refer to (e.g., Cronbach's alpha, item-total correlations) for clarity.

The description of session content is good. However, it would be helpful to explain how participants' feelings and experiences shared in the first session were used to tailor subsequent sessions.

The table presents clear descriptive statistics, but an explanation of why the control group's scores slightly changed from pre-test to post-test and follow-up would provide a more comprehensive analysis.

The explanation of systemic family therapy's impact on self-differentiation and anxiety is well articulated, but it would benefit from including specific examples or case studies from the literature that illustrate these points.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The sentence "This pandemic has not only resulted in high mortality rates due to viral infection but has also caused a psychological catastrophe globally" should specify the nature of the psychological impact with more detail or examples from the literature to enhance understanding.

The impact of autism on mothers is mentioned. It would be helpful to include specific studies or data that quantify this impact, providing a stronger foundation for the study's importance.

The sample size calculation and justification are clear. However, the statement "Considering sample attrition based on previous studies an estimated drop-out rate of 2 individuals per group was predicted" should cite the previous studies used for this estimation.

The significance values indicate effectiveness, but the sentence "The obtained F-ratio for the group factor in the dimensions of alexithymia psychological capital and mental vitality was significant" should discuss the practical significance and effect sizes to contextualize these results.

The results are clearly significant. However, the post hoc test results should be discussed in more detail, explaining what the differences between time points mean in practical terms.

The discussion begins by reaffirming the study's aims and findings. The sentence "These results align with the prior findings (Lax 2020; Wampler 2020)" should elaborate on how the results align with these studies, providing a comparison of findings.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.