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The effectiveness of mindfulness training based on reducing stress on the desire for divorce, blood pressure and sexual satisfaction in betrayed women with high blood pressure

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Abstract

The present study investigated the effectiveness of mind training in reducing stress on the desire for divorce, blood pressure, and sexual satisfaction in high blood pressure women. The research method is quasi-experimental with a pre-test and post-test design with a control group. The statistical population included women referred to the cognitive counseling service centers in the 1st district of Tehran in 2018 for marital problems and infidelity. The 30 sample people are randomly selected into two experimental and control groups. People of both experimental and control groups responded to the questionnaires about the desire to divorce Roselet et al. (1986) and the sexual entitlement questionnaire of Halbert (1992), and the blood pressure was recorded using a resistance sphygmomanometer. Then, the mental treatment program to reduce stress was implemented during eight sessions, and each session lasted 90 minutes for the experimental group. However, the control group did not receive any intervention. After the end of the course, both experimental and control groups were tested again with the same questionnaires, and blood pressure was measured using the same sphygmomanometer. The obtained data were used by covariance analysis to test the hypotheses. The results showed that mind training reduces stress, reduces the desire for divorce, and blood pressure, and increases sexual satisfaction in high-blood-pressure cheating women ($p < 0.01$). Mind training increased sexual satisfaction and decreased the desire for divorce and blood pressure. It is suggested to use mind training to promote health, and improve sexual performance and interpersonal relationships of betrayed women.

Keywords: *Mindfulness, desire for divorce, blood pressure, sexual entitlement, marital infidelity*

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Introduction

A successful marriage makes people live happier, healthier, and more cheerfully, and it is in such a relationship that there is the hope of creating a sense of belonging, and the resulting commitment and loyalty bring a sense of security and stability (Afshari Kashanian, Zaharakar, Mohsenzadeh, and Tajik Esmaili, 2018). Marital infidelity is a shocking event for couples and the family institution; it is considered a disorder in behavior, causes various injuries and problems for the unfaithful spouse and the injured spouse, and is a common topic in psychotherapy and family counseling. (Warach and Joseph, 2019). Research has shown that women experience different emotional crises, such as anxiety, depression, sexual dysfunction, mistrust, etc., after marital infidelity of their (Snyder, Baucom, and Gordon, 2012). One of the variables influenced by the emotional connection and betrayal between husband and wife is the desire for divorce (Poorhosseinali & Amirfakhraei, 2019). Desire for divorce means couples' degree of desire and interest to separate and break marital relations (Sheikhpour, Sedposhan, Fallah, and Razavi, 2018). The desire to divorce has three dimensions: cognitive (people's ideas about divorce), emotional (positive and negative feelings and emotions about divorce), and behavioral (doing actions and behaviors to do or not do divorce) (Roelofs, 2019). Elden and Taylor believe that if sincere attitudes are low in the life of couples, it causes inappropriate interactions and satisfaction and happiness in relationships are disturbed, which can lead to the desire for divorce (Elden & Taylor, 2013). On the other hand, sexual rights and sexual dissatisfaction cause conflict, leading to indifference, and indifference restarts the vicious cycle of

sexual dissatisfaction (Zarenejad, Hosseini, and Rahmati, 2019). The family is the origin of the development of society. Low sexual satisfaction is expected to affect marital relations and fuel marital conflicts. Conflict occurs when one party's actions interfere with the other party's actions. As two people become closer, the potential for conflict increases (Taylor, Papello, & Sears, 2014). Albert and Emmons have defined courage or self-righteousness as the ability of people to act on their own interests and stand up for it without anxiety and express their rights without trampling on the rights of others (Christenson, Lalos and Johnson, 2017). In examining the role of sexual entitlement on women's sexuality, Hulbert concluded that women with high sexual entitlement have more sexual activity, orgasm, sexual desire, sexual satisfaction, and marital satisfaction (Hulbert, 2016). Tolor et al. showed that sexual stereotypes and self-concept affect people's daring differently. Women with low gender role stereotypes were significantly more assertive than men with low gender role stereotypes (Tulver & Kennelly, 2017). Betrayed women are exposed to problems caused by psychological pressure. One of the problems that can be seen in these women is high blood pressure (Yousfi, 2011). High blood pressure is one of the most important factors threatening human health, especially in developing countries, including Iran. It is also a multi-caused disease caused by the interaction of various environmental and genetic factors (Khosravi & Ghorbani, 2016).

In the explanation and treatment of couples involved with the problem of marital infidelity, various theoretical models have been presented. Among the presented models, we can mention mindfulness based on stress reduction (Khosravi & Ghorbani,

2016). Cognitive therapy based on mindfulness teaches patients how to transform the ruminating, habitual, and automatic pattern of the mind into a thoughtful and deliberate pattern of the mind as soon as it is identified so that negative thoughts and feelings are recognized from a broader perspective as simple events passing through the mind. It includes various meditations, stretching yoga, body review exercises, and several cognitive therapy exercises that show the connection between mood, thoughts and feelings, and bodily sensations (Teasdale, Segal, and Williams, 1994). The effectiveness of mindfulness-based treatments is due to the involvement of clients' spiritual or religious beliefs in the treatment process (Sakeni et al., 2019). One of the important aspects of mindfulness-based therapy is that people learn to deal with negative emotions and thoughts and experience mental events positively (Boljimer, 2016). The research of Ahmad Vand, Heydari, and Shayari (2012) showed that by increasing the components of mindfulness, psychological well-being increases, and people's stress and physical and mental diseases decrease. The most common method of mindfulness training is based on stress reduction, previously known as the stress reduction and relaxation program (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Mindfulness-based stress reduction is a behavioral intervention based on attention and self-focus. In this way, people learn to expand acceptance and compassion instead of judging their experience, create awareness of the present moment instead of automatic guidance and learn new ways of responding to situations (Masoumian, Golzari, Shoairi and Momenzadeh, 2012). Arghami (2017) confirmed the effectiveness of mindfulness-based therapy on marital conflicts of couples

applying for a divorce. Ahmadi (2017) showed that cognitive therapy training based on mindfulness effectively reduces patients' blood pressure. Considering the high prevalence of divorce and the important role that divorce plays in jeopardizing the health of society, designing strategies to reduce the emotional damage of divorce in society seems necessary. Considering the lack of studies conducted on the effectiveness of the mindfulness program based on reducing stress on variables such as the desire for divorce, blood pressure, and sexual desire, and considering the growing trend of the above method in the treatment of various disorders. The current research was conducted to answer the question: Does mindfulness training based on stress reduction affect the desire for divorce, blood pressure, and sexual satisfaction in betrayed women with high blood pressure?

Method

This is a quasi-experimental study with a pre-test and post-test design with a control group. The statistical population of this research includes all the betrayed women with high blood pressure who were referred to counseling centers in Tehran. Among these, 30 people are available based on the selection criteria and are randomly placed in two experimental and control groups (15 people in each group). First, the people of both experimental and control groups complete the necessary questionnaires. Also, blood pressure was recorded using the same sphygmomanometer. Then the mindfulness treatment program based on stress reduction is implemented during eight sessions, each lasting 90 minutes for the experimental group. However, the control group does not receive any intervention. After the end of the course, the subjects of both experimental and control groups were again tested by the same

questionnaires, and blood pressure was measured using the same sphygmomanometer. Then, the data obtained from the questionnaires were statistically analyzed by SPSS version 22 software. The criteria for entering the research were: literacy in reading and writing, female gender, Willingness to participate in research: Not having physical or mental illnesses that prevent participation in training sessions, Not to participate in other pieces of training at the same time as mindfulness-based stress reduction training; history of the infidelity of the spouse; A history of high blood pressure with average systolic blood pressure greater than 140 mmHg or diastolic blood pressure greater than 90 mmHg. The exclusion criteria were: the absence of more than two sessions in the meetings and the unwillingness of the participant to continue the meetings.

Materials

Hulbert's Sexual Entitlement Questionnaire. This questionnaire was compiled in 1992 by David Farley Halbert to measure women's sexual entitlement in interaction with others. This questionnaire contains 25 questions, and a 5-point Likert scale was used to select its options. Options are graded from never to always. The scoring of each question is from 0 to 4 according to the chosen option. The range of test scores is from 0 to 100, where a higher score indicates high sexual orientation, and a low score indicates low sexual orientation. In the implementation of Halbert's sex index by David Farley Halbert, the test-retest reliability was 0.86 (Halbert & Apt, 1992). In

its implementation by Shafiei (2005) on 40 married female students, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.92. Re-implementing it by Bay (2008) on 15 educated married women, the total alpha coefficient of the test was 0.95. This index has a structured content validity with an internal consistency of 0.91. **Propensity to Divorce Questionnaire.** This questionnaire was first designed by Roosevelt, Johnson, and Morrow (1986). This questionnaire is a 14-question tool used to evaluate couples prone to divorce. Each item is scored using a 7-point rating scale (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=very little, 4=little, 5=a lot, 6=very much, 7=always). Therefore, the scores of this questionnaire are obtained by summing the scores of the subjects. In other words, it is the minimum and maximum score for measuring willingness or unwillingness to divorce, and a high score indicates a high willingness to divorce in the subjects. Roosevelt, Johnson, and Morrow (1986) reported an alpha coefficient of 0.86 in the statistical analysis of this questionnaire (Roosevelt & Bonk, 1993). Davoudi, Etemadi, and Bahrami (2008) standardized this questionnaire in Iran. It was applied to 40 couples, and its reliability was obtained using Cronbach's alpha method for the whole sample as 0.88 (0.89 for women and 0.87 for men).

Mindfulness training protocol based on stress reduction. Mindfulness therapy program based on stress reduction based on Kabat-Zinn et al.'s (1992) protocol, which includes 8 2-hour sessions and is implemented once a week as a group for the intervention group.

Table 1. Mindfulness protocol based on stress reduction

Session	Content
1	Introducing members to each other, the necessity of using mindfulness training, practicing eating raisins with awareness, weekly assignments

2	Review of last week's homework, practicing body awareness meditation, so one becomes aware of his bodily sensations, discussing body awareness practice and obstacles to practice, ten minutes of breathing with mindfulness and mind meditation, homework.
3	Review last week's homework, practice seeing and hearing, keeping thoughts and mind open by following meditation practices, and focus on the homework on conscious breathing and body parts.
4	Reviewing last week's homework, 5-minute practice of seeing or hearing with mindfulness (awareness of breathing, body parts, sounds, thoughts, and conscious choices); Discussing the importance of staying in the present and how to free the mind from past and future regrets and worries; Sitting meditation with an emphasis on breathing; Practice walking with mindfulness; Homework.
5	Review of last week's homework, three-minute breathing exercise, sitting meditation (awareness of breathing, body, sounds, thoughts), checking awareness of pleasant and unpleasant events on feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, homework.
6	Review of last week's homework, three-minute breathing space exercise, raising the problems of the group members during the exercise and discovering its effects on the body and mind, discussion about seeing thoughts or substitute thoughts differently, sitting meditation (presence of the mind from sounds and thoughts), homework.
7	Review of last week's homework, sitting meditation, awareness of breathing, body, sounds, thoughts, and attention to reactions given to problems, making a list of enjoyable activities, three-minute breathing space, homework.
8	Review last week's assignments, body check exercise, 3-minute breathing space exercise, review of the entire program, summary of meetings, discussion about programs, and continuation of exercises.

Findings

According to the analysis of demographic data, most participants were over 40 years old, and the least number of participants were between 20-30 years old. Also, the highest

education frequency in both groups was diploma; The average results and standard deviation of research variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The mean and standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test scores of the variables in the control and experimental groups

Variable	Group	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Desire for divorce	Control	66/07	10/613	65/20	13/116
	Experiment	70/20	11/384	63/67	8/821
Blood pressure	Control	158/00	9/776	158/13	12/011
	Experiment	162/47	11/880	147/47	9/538
Sexual rights	Control	43/07	9/520	41/80	9/586
	Experiment	42/67	9/641	48/20	8/231

Covariance analysis was used to investigate the difference between the groups in the desire for divorce, sexual satisfaction, and blood pressure. One of the assumptions of

this analysis is the equality of error variances. Table 2 shows the results of the normal distribution of scores and homogeneity of variances test.

Table 3. The results of the normal distribution of scores and homogeneity of variances test

Variable	Group	Levene		Kolmogorov Smirnov		Regression slope	
		Statistics	Sig	Statistics	Sig	Statistics	Sig
Desire for divorce	Mindfulness	0/613	0/440	0/910	0/380	2/31	0/19
	Control	0/378	0/544	0/559	0/914		
Blood pressure	Mindfulness	0/236	0/631	0/613	0/847	1/17	0/26
	Control	1/526	0/227	0/949	0/329		
Sexual rights	Mindfulness	0/117	0/734	0/510	0/957	1/14	0/36
	Control	0/611	0/440	0/416	0/995		

According to Table 3, the Z-statistic of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is not significant for all research variables in all groups; Therefore, it can be concluded that the distribution of

variables is normal. Also, Levin's statistic is insignificant in research groups for dependent variables. These findings show that the variance of these variables is homogeneous in the groups.

Table 4. Univariate covariance analysis of post-test scores of willingness to divorce

Source	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	Sig	mean square
pre-test	2618/206	1	2618/206	80/374	0/000	0/749
group	192/802	1	192/802	5/919	0/022	0/180
error	879/528	27	32/575			

According to the above table, the significance levels related to the group (mindfulness training) regarding the score of desire to divorce in the post-test is less than 0.05, so the above test is significant with 95% confidence. It can be accepted that mindfulness training affects the desire for divorce in betrayed women. Considering the averages, we find that the desire for divorce decreased after mindfulness training

in the post-test. The squared eta values show that 18% of the variance of the desire to divorce in the post-test is explained through mindfulness training. In general, based on the findings, the hypothesis is confirmed that mindfulness training based on stress reduction has an effect on the desire for divorce of betrayed women with high blood pressure.

Table 5. Univariate covariance analysis of blood pressure post-test scores

Source	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	Sig	mean square
pre-test	667/035	1	667/035	6/857	0/014	0/203
group	1152/072	1	1152/072	11/843	0/002	0/305
error	2626/432	27	97/275			

According to the above table, the significance levels related to the group (mindfulness training), in the case of blood pressure after the test, is less than 0.05, so the above test is significant with 95% confidence. It can be accepted that mindfulness training affects blood pressure in betrayed women. Considering the averages, we find that blood pressure decreased after

mindfulness training in the post-test period. Eta squared values show that 30.5% of the blood pressure variance in the post-test is explained through mindfulness training. In general, based on the findings, the hypothesis is confirmed that mindfulness training based on stress reduction has an effect on the blood pressure of betrayed women with high blood pressure.

Table 6. Univariate covariance analysis of post-test scores of sexual entitlement

Source	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	Sig	mean square
pre-test	1919/540	1	1919/540	164/396	0/000	0/859
group	341/122	1	341/122	29/215	0/000	0/520
error	315/260	27	315/260			

According to the above table, the significance levels related to the group (mindfulness training) regarding the sexual satisfaction score in the post-test are less than 0.05. Therefore, the above test is significant with 95% certainty, and it can be accepted that mindfulness training affects sexual justice in betrayed women. Considering the averages, we find that sexual satisfaction has increased after mindfulness training in the post-test period. The squared eta values show that 52% of the variance of sexual satisfaction in the post-test is explained through mindfulness training. In general, based on the findings, the hypothesis is confirmed that mindfulness training based on stress reduction has an effect on the sexual rights of betrayed women with high blood pressure.

Discussion

The present research was conducted with the aim of investigating the effectiveness of mindfulness training based on reducing stress on the desire for divorce, blood pressure and sexual satisfaction in betrayed women with high blood pressure. According to the statistical findings, it can be said that mindfulness training has an effect on the desire for divorce, blood pressure and sexual satisfaction in betrayed women. Considering the averages, we find that the amount of desire for divorce and blood pressure after mindfulness training in the post-test period has decreased and the amount of sexual entitlement has increased after mindfulness training in the post-test period. The results are consistent with the findings of Akhwan Hassanabadi (2018), Arqami (2017), Ahmadi Najari (2017), Croft et al. (2017),

McCullough and Root (2015), Jaskobson (2014) and Karim (2013).

In explaining these findings, it can be said that mindfulness training is focused on attention, preventing rumination and tending to worrisome responses, and causes the expansion of new thoughts and the reduction of unpleasant emotions. Mindfulness training by helping people to know themselves better and experience a non-judgmental, receptive, trusting, patient and kind attitude, causes people to become aware of relationships in relation to others and increase the amount of their social contacts. Also, it should somehow be effective on interpersonal behaviors. In other words, it can be said that mindfulness training has increased the awareness of relationships, which can increase the satisfaction of married life by controlling the stressful factors of life and then using coping resources efficiently and maintaining one's health. As a result, the desire for divorce will decrease. On the other hand, mindfulness is a new style for more efficient communication with life, which relieves or alleviates human pains and sufferings and enriches life more and makes it enjoyable. Therefore, it is logical that mindfulness improves the quality of marital relationships and reduces the desire for divorce (Arqami, 2017). Considering that having negative emotions such as fear, sadness, guilt, excitement, anger, constant and all-encompassing feelings of frustration form the basis of neurosis, by training mindfulness and improving the individual's reaction to

negative emotions, the individual's neurosis will decrease. A person has a better ability to cope with mental disorders, and as a result, his blood pressure also decreases. Mindfulness through teaching attention control, time management, performing various exercises, changing the attitude and insight of patients towards the disease, and also doing homework including mindfulness exercises, performing normal life activities in the form of mindfulness, recording pleasant and unpleasant events and participating in happy relationships, learning correct and effective coping strategies for dealing with stressful events in life, such as marital infidelity, illness and related events, lowers blood pressure (Hasanabadi, 2018). Mindfulness training causes the elements of attitudes, attention and intention to be strengthened in a person at the same time. The strengthening of these components allows him to develop a point of view in experiences that moves from the judgmental, objective and unexplained state of thoughts, feelings and emotions as transitory phenomena to non-judgmental and receptive thoughts. Also feel the flexibility in your mental processes. In other words, this change allows a person to identify and interrupt habitual patterns or mental states and initiate responses that are more reflective than reactive, and this leads to full awareness of inefficient, defective, and alternative mental processes. It leads to healthy mental processes. As a result, mindfulness training reduces the amount of tension and stress in married life in people, and the less the tension and stress in life, the less the level of conflict and conflict in the family environment, and as a result, marital relations, including sexual relations, improves. Because accepting the problems and issues of life and accepting them and

paying attention to their solutions reduces psychological pressures, and the less psychological pressures, the less conflicts and conflicts in married life, and women are satisfied with their marital relationships, especially sexual relationships. will be (Ahmadi Najari, 2016).

Among the limitations of this research, it can be mentioned that due to the fact that the research community is limited to one city, the generalization of the results to the whole of the betrayed women should be done with caution. According to the findings of the research, mindfulness training based on stress reduction has an effect on the desire for divorce, blood pressure and sexual rights of betrayed women with high blood pressure. Therefore, mindfulness therapy can be implemented for betrayed women in counseling centers in the form of individual or group classes.

Ethics

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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Conflict of Interest

According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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