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The mediating role of the meaning of life and belief in God in the relationship between individual attachment style and premature grief in patients with MS

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Abstract

This research was conducted to determine the mediating role of the meaning of life and belief in God in the relationship between a person's attachment style and premature grief in people with M.S. The current descriptive and correlational research and the statistical population of the research were all women members of the M.S. Association of Shiraz in 1400. Among the statistical population, 205 women from M.S. patients were selected and studied by the available sampling method. To collect data, questionnaires of meaning in life were used by Steiger et al. (2006), premature mourning of Dehghani (2012), Khoda Bavari Beck and MacDonald (2004), and Hazen and Shiver (1985) attachment styles. After collecting and extracting data, participants' scores were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and path analysis. The results showed a significant negative correlation (0.01) between the meaning of life, belief in God, and secure attachment style with premature grief and a positive correlation between avoidant attachment style and ambivalent attachment style with premature grief (0.05). Also, the indirect effects of mediating variables showed that the meaning of life and belief in God significantly mediate the relationship between a person's attachment style and premature grief in people with M.S.

Keywords: *Meaning of life, belief in God, personal attachment style, premature grief, M.S.*

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Introduction

Multiple sclerosis is one of the common autoimmune diseases associated with inflammation and destruction and affects the central nervous system. Because the destruction caused by this disease may happen in several places, it is called multiple sclerosis or multiple sclerosis, the abbreviation of M.S. (Roland, 2016). Although grief is a common and universal phenomenon, dealing with it, especially in severe diseases, has certain complications (Dennison, Moss-Morris, and Chalder, 2009). Grief specifically refers to the process of experiencing death or the permanent loss of a loved one. Grief and grief include a range of emotions, from deep mourning to anger. The process of dealing with grief can differ from person to person depending on the background, beliefs, relationship of the person with the thing that was lost, and other factors. Grief in M.S. patients is a common reaction that a person may experience due to the changes that the disease brings to him, his family, or his relationships. Family members may also experience grief due to the loss of the patient as one of the active members of the family or the change in the type of relationship they have with him.

Attachment style is one of the variables related to the mental health of a person with M.S. and can affect the level of mourning. John Bowlby is the first person to provide a comprehensive and systematic definition of attachment. He defined attachment styles for adults in two ways: one is internal representations or patterns that guide interpersonal behavior or information processing. The other is the specific strategies and methods that people use to maintain their security and based on these two definitions, three attachment styles have been proposed for adults: secure attachment

style, ambivalent, anxious attachment style, and insecure-avoidant attachment style.

Regarding the role of belief in God in enduring suffering caused by illness, researchers have also shown that membership in religious groups both reflects positive energy and consolidates the value of family life (Girish & Baili, 2018). Studies focused on specific diseases have found challenges to meaningfulness and a sense of meaning in patients (Lichtenthal, Roberts, and Shak, 2013). Researchers found that people with certain diseases can redefine the meaning of life and their sense of identity (Rosenberg, Stark, and Jones, 2014). Therefore, according to the stated content, this research aims to determine the mediating role of the meaning of life and belief in God in the relationship between a person's attachment style and premature grief in people with M.S.

Method

The current research has an applied purpose, and in terms of methodology, the method it follows is a correlation. The statistical population of the present study was formed by all the members of the M.S. Association of Shiraz city in 2020, whose population consisted of 440 people. The purposeful sampling method (based on the goal) was used in this research. For this purpose, 205 people were selected among the members of M.S. Association of Shiraz city in a targeted and accessible manner and based on Morgan's table, who answered the questionnaires about the meaning of life, belief in God, personal attachment style, and premature grief.

Materials

1. Standard Questionnaire of Meaning in Life. Students' meaning in life questionnaire was designed by Stiger et al. in (2006). This scale has ten items and two components. A

five-point Likert scale scores the materials of this questionnaire. The minimum possible score is ten, and the maximum is 25. A score between 10 and 16: the amount of meaning in life is low. A score between 16 and 33: the amount of meaning in life is average. A score higher than 33: the amount of meaning in life is high.

2. Premature Grief Questionnaire.

Premature grief questionnaire is used for those with a sick child or one of their relatives or who are involved with a complex disease (cancer). The premature grief questionnaire was standardized by Dehghani (2012), which has 50 items and examines and evaluates the amount of premature grief in an individual. The scoring of the questionnaire is based on a 5-point Likert scale from very agree to very disagree. The minimum possible score is 50, and the maximum is 250. A score between 50 and 100: the amount of premature mourning in the person is low. A score between 100 and 150: the amount of premature mourning in a person is average. A score higher than 150: the amount of premature mourning in the person is high.

3. God Belief Questionnaire. This scale was prepared by Beck and MacDonald (2004) and has 24 five-choice questions (completely disagree = 1 to completely agree = 5). The content of the questions is about a person's relationship with God, and each person should answer one of the options according to the type of his relationship with God. This scale evaluates the four factors of attention to God, trust versus lack of trust, trust, and connection with God. The minimum possible score is 24, and the maximum is 120. A score between 24 and 48: Low attachment level to God. A score between 48 and 72: the degree of attachment to God is average. A score higher than 72: the degree of attachment to God is high.

4. Hazen and Shiver Attachment Styles

Questionnaire: This questionnaire was created for the first time by Hazen and Shiver in 1987, a self-report scale. This questionnaire has 15 items; five items are assigned to each of the three secure, avoidant and ambivalent attachment styles. It is graded on a Likert scale from never = 1 to almost always = 5. The subject's minimum and maximum scores in the test subscales will be 5 and 25, respectively.

Findings

Meaning of life with a mean and standard deviation of 26.96 (4.41), belief in God with a mean and standard deviation of 58.98 (13.68), secure attachment style with a mean and standard deviation of 14.40 (3.94), attachment style Avoidance with a mean and standard deviation of 16.07 (5.34) and an ambivalent attachment style were reported as 17.49 (3.65).

There is a significant negative correlation between the meaning of life score, belief in God, and secure attachment style with premature grief at the 0.01 level, and between the avoidant attachment style at the 0.01 level and the ambivalent attachment style with premature grief, there is a positive correlation at the 0.05 level. Is.

The path coefficients model results showed a significant direct relationship between secure, avoidant, and ambivalent attachment styles with the meaning of life. Also, there is a significant direct relationship between secure, avoidant, and ambivalent attachment style with belief in God and secure, avoidant, and ambivalent attachment style with premature grief. There is a significant direct relationship between the meaning of life and belief in God with premature grief.

Bootstrap was used for the significance of mediating relationships. Considering that zero was placed outside the confidence

interval (upper limit and lower limit), this mediating role is significant; In this way, the hypotheses related to indirect (intermediate) paths were confirmed.

A goodness of fit index (GFI) equal to 0.98 adjusted goodness of fit index (CFI) equal to 0.97 has been obtained. The size of the indices obtained from the structural model fit test indicates that the model fits well. The root means square error approximation (RMSEA) is equal to 0.067 and is less than 0.08, and this index also indicates the excellent fit of the model.

Discussion

The present study aimed to determine the mediating role of the meaning of life and belief in God in the relationship between a person's attachment style and premature grief in people with M.S. Pearson's correlation results showed a significant negative correlation between the meaning of life score, belief in God, and secure attachment style with premature grief at the level of 0.01. Also, there is a positive correlation between avoidant attachment style at 0.01 and ambivalent attachment style with premature grief at 0.05. The bootstrap test was used to analyze the effect of mediating and indirect variables. The results showed that the meaning of life and attachment to God significantly mediate the relationship between a person's attachment style and premature grief in M.S. patients.

The meaning of life can enable the patient or the patient's family to discover their unique meaning. The meaning of life is effective in breaking the vicious cycle of depression. In fact, the search for meaning gives real meaning to life. Therefore, the transience and transition of life do not reduce its meaning, and what is very important is how a person views suffering and how he bears it. For this reason, people willingly endure pain and

suffering that has meaning and purpose (Narimani & Eini, 2019). Endurance and transience are not only of the main characteristics of human life but it is also considered the fundamental factor of its meaning. The meaning of life helps M.S. patients experience existence and show efforts to actualize values, accept responsibility and undertake a certain task. If the sick person follows the instruction "Always act as if it's the second time you live and act as if you thought you were very wrong the first time you acted" as an example of his behavior, he will feel a tremendous responsibility. and the anxiety of non-existence and mortality or premature mourning will decrease (Esmailpour & Bakhsalizadeh Moradi, 2014).

In addition to having a different schema, patients with insecure, ambivalent, and avoidant attachment styles usually withdraw their natural emotions and tendencies and are unaware of them. Therefore, these people with a negative view of themselves and important others (God as an important image in life) create a cold and distant relationship, which as a result of this distance and decrease in attachment to God, will lead to an increase in premature mourning.

The meaning of life in M.S. patients leads to a feeling of sovereignty and mastery over life affairs and changes in internal control, to internal control of despair and hopelessness in achieving one's desires, and reduces the anxiety of death and, as a result, premature mourning in him (Mousavi & Vatankhah, 2016).

It can be said that the reason for premature mourning in M.S. patients with an anxious, insecure attachment style is the presence of high anxiety in their relationships with significant others (God). This existence of anxiety in attachment to God has led to an

increase in premature mourning in M.S. patients. People with spiritual beliefs and belief in God have a special attitude towards death and fear caused by thinking about it. This special attitude originates from the fact that all the disturbing events and phenomena of life, including death, find another meaning for them in the bed of faith and belief in divine support.

In the practical field, considering the effect of the meaning of life in reducing premature grief in M.S. patients, it is suggested that treatment units at the country level, especially welfare counselors and those working in rehabilitation centers and M.S. associations, put the group meaning therapy program at the top of their treatment methods.

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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