The effect of sexual skills training on marital satisfaction

Lotfi Kashani, Farah a*, Vaziri, Shahramb

a Department of Clinical Psychology, Roudehen branch, Islamic Azad University, Roudehen, Iran
b Department of Clinical Psychology, Roudehen branch, Islamic Azad University, Roudehen, Iran

Abstract

The research purpose is to investigate the effect of sexual skills training on the increase of positive feeling toward spouse and marital satisfaction regarding different factors of marital relationship, conflict resolution style, sexual relationship and total marital satisfaction. The statistical population consisted of married women in Roudehen and Science and Research Branches of Islamic Azad Universities of Iran, out of which a sample of 12 volunteers attended five two-hour sexual training classes. The distributed questionnaires which were responded to, were Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire (115-item test) in order to assess the marital satisfaction and its factors and Positive Feeling toward Spouse Inventory. The results of the study revealed that sexual skill training has significant effect on positive feelings toward spouse, marital relationship, conflict resolution style, sexual relationship and total marital satisfaction. Furthermore, it can be mentioned that sexual skills training can play an influential role in eliciting positive emotions and love maintenance, personal emotions and beliefs toward the role of sexual relation in marriage maintenance, developing the conflict resolution ability, personal satisfaction of expressing emotions and a sense of ease to talk about sexual matters and being engaged in sexual intercourse, and also couples' satisfaction with married life.

Keywords: sexual training, marital satisfaction

1. Introduction

Marital satisfaction is a multidimensional concept that includes different factors such as personality features, financial matters, child rearing styles, and sexual relations. As Hakins said quoted from Ahuyi (2004), marital satisfaction is defined as a blooming mental emotion of mutual satisfaction and experienced enjoyment. Marital satisfaction is, in fact, a positive attitude and emotion for wife and husband.

Research studies on effective factors of marital satisfaction was initiated about 1950, and flourished in 1990s. Various studies showed that factors like positive dealing; using accusation, anger, and rejection for conflict solving (Pasch & Bradbury, 1998); using conflict solving style, wife's demand-husband's rejection (Kurdek, 1996); self-disclosure, spouse self-disclosure, view points toward spouse attributes and marriage duration (Russell Hatch & Bulcroft, 2004) have potential effects on marital satisfaction. Fincham, Beach & Davila (2004) showed that conflict solving style and the ability to show feelings in the first 5 years of life is a determining factor in marital satisfaction. Couple's agreement on the style of relation, emotions expression, sexual relation, leisure time activities, home duties sharing, duration of being beside each other, external network and supply (Vangelisti & Huston, 1994) and incompatible explanations (Bradbury, Beach, Fincham, and Nelson, 1996) can affect other factors with regard to marital satisfaction. Beside these variables, sexual relationship is one of the most important factors of marital
satisfaction (Gerhardstein, 1997; Brezsnyuk quoted from Young et al, 2000; Modanlu et al, 2005). Amirianzadeh & Yazdani (2005) showed that agreement on the quality and style of sexual relation, and its resulted desire is highly effective on marital satisfaction and promotes better mental health in wife and husband. Generally, marital happiness is related to sexual satisfaction. Happy couples have more sexual relations than unhappy ones. Totally, it can be said that sexual inactivity poses major problems in married life (Donnelly, 1993). Findings of Morokoff & Gilliland (1993) also affirm the relation between marital satisfaction and different aspects of sexual functioning including sexual satisfaction, impression of spouse's sexual satisfaction, and the number of sexual intercourses. It can be said that sexual intimacy relates to emotional intimacy, and intercourse quality is the starting-point of many marital problems (Harbin & Gambel, 1977). Lack of warm relations and inability in revelation and exchange of emotions is from specifications of couples who suffer sexual inactivities. The common feature of the couples who refer to medical clinics is that, they have encountered problems in their sexual lives (Besharat, 1998).

A study titled “The Knowledge of Healthy Sexual Relations and Sex Education Needs among Young Couples Who Are about to Marry” by Agha Mohammadian Sherbaf et al (2005) in Mashad, Iran, had the following results; Women are prevented from sexual information by 27% books, 6% internet, 9% personal experience, 38% friends, 20% family; and men by 34% books, 4% internet, 7% personal experience, 40% friends, and 15% family. Importance of sexual trainings before marriage among studied couples was 81% for men and 73% for women. Also, the role of sexual factors in the continuance of married life was 54% for women and 72% for men. Importance of having regular sexual relations was 51% for women and 67% for men. The ability of articulating sexual desire by women was 18% never, 48% hardly ever, and 34% easily, and by men was 10% never, 31% hardly ever, and 59% easily. Offering to have sexual intercourse by women was 41% never, 38% sometimes, 16% often, and 5% always, and by men was 5% never, 31% sometimes, 40% often, and 24% always. Ability to arouse sexual partner by women was 6% never, 50% sometimes, 20% often, and 24% always, and by men was 6% never, 24% sometimes, 43% often, and 27% always. Ability to satisfy sexual partner by women was 7% never, 26% sometimes, 30% often, and 37% always, and by men was 5% never, 20% sometimes, 46% often, and 34% always.

In the study by Ghasemi & Ehsanpour (2004), the need for having sexual education was above average. It was also pinpointed that need for sexual education was of higher degree in women than men. Mazur et al. (2002), in a study on married American and German men found that couples' health and marital satisfaction depend upon sexual relations among Americans, while such a relation was not observed among Germans, Guo & Huang (2005) in their retrospective studies found that sexual satisfaction exerts significant effect on marital satisfaction and sex education brings about principal effect on sexual relation. In a study carried out by Bahreynian & Saki (2002), and Jafari et al. (2003) in Ilam, Iran, have known sexual training as a very important factor for couples and 95% of this group have placed emphasis on these trainings. Regarding to what was mentioned, we are going to study the effects of training sexual skills on the increment of “positive emotions toward spouse” and “marital satisfaction” including marital relation components, ability of conflict solving, sexual relation and marital satisfaction.

2. Method

Statistical population of this study included female married students of Islamic Azad University in Roudehen and Sciences and Researches branch. Sample group was at first 30 persons who were volunteers to attend the training classes and then decreased to 12 persons, because their curriculum overlapped with these sessions.

Tool

Questionnaires for this study included “Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire” (115-question form) in order to assess the marital satisfaction and its components and “Positive Emotions toward Spouse Inventory”. Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire was developed by Olsun, Furiner, and Drunkman and its reliability and validity coefficients are 95% and 41%-60% (Sanayi, 2000), respectively. Positive Emotions Questionnaire was prepared by Eliri, Fincham, and Terkoniz which contained 17 questions and its reliability and validity coefficients are 94% and 91%, respectively (Sanayi, 2000).

Therapeutic Intervention

Totally, 5 sessions, each 2 hours, were held for conducting the study. Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire was administered at the first and middle session, and also after 3 months. Positive Emotions Questionnaire was also distributed and responded to in each session. Frameworks of training approvals are:
Pre-session Preparation of participants, description of instructions and subject area of training sexual skills.

Session 1 Discussion on the importance of sexual relation and differences between woman and man in sexual matters.

Session 2 Discussion on female genital organ and erogenous zones.

Session 3 Description of the stages of human sexual response cycle, 1-excitement, 2-plateau, 3-orgasm, 4-resolution, the practice of shifting the excitement region from clitoris to G-spot.

Session 4 Methods to reach sexuality; practice for arousing and reaching sexually arousing stimuli thoughts by the five senses without using genitals.

Session 5 Strategies toward having better sexual relation; practice for reminding one’s own erotic fantasies, noting them and giving positive feedback to himself/herself.

Session 6-8 Answering the questions and examining experiments.

3. Findings

As mentioned above, 12 persons of volunteers were tested. Data was analyzed by Repeated Measure method. Statistical components for positive emotions toward spouse in four executions are illustrated in table 1.

Table 1: Statistical components for positive emotions toward spouse questionnaire

| Numbers | 1st execution | 2nd execution | 3rd execution | 4th execution |
|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Average | 100.92        | 103.67        | 106.67        | 111.25        |
| Mean    | 101.50        | 101.50        | 104.50        | 112.50        |
| Mode    | 104           | 98            | 117           | 100           |
| S.D.    | 9.06          | 9.86          | 12.32         | 8.39          |
| Variance| 82.08         | 151.15        | 151.70        | 70.39         |
| Sum     | 1211          | 1280          | 1280          | 1335          |

Table 2: Statistical components of variables

| Component                | Execution | Min. | S.D. | Var. |
|--------------------------|-----------|------|------|------|
| Marriage relation        | Posttest  | 9    | 3.90 | 15.242 |
|                          | Posttest  | 10   | 3.58 | 12.818 |
|                          | Follow-up | 10   | 3.33 | 11.061 |
| Conflict solving         | 1         | 8    | 3.08 | 9.477  |
|                          | 2         | 11   | 2.81 | 7.879  |
|                          | 3         | 11   | 3.00 | 9.000  |
| Sexual relation          | 1         | 6    | 2.64 | 6.992  |
|                          | 2         | 10   | 1.48 | 2.182  |
|                          | 3         | 6    | 2.53 | 6.424  |
| Marital satisfaction     | 1         | 19   | 4.78 | 22.879 |
|                          | 2         | 21   | 4.48 | 20.061 |
|                          | 3         | 24   | 3.82 | 14.568 |

In order to study the first hypothesis of the research proposing that training sexual skill can increase marital satisfaction, regarding to employing Repeated Measure analysis of data of positive emotions toward spouse (Table 3) shows that in this case that includes positive emotions, love of spouse, and one's feeling toward having sexual intercourse, F is significant and there is a linear trend.

Table 3. Repeated Measure of Data

| Variables            | Index | SS       | df | SA     | F       | Sig. |
|----------------------|-------|----------|----|--------|---------|------|
| Positive Emotion     | Sessions Linear | 693.600 | 1  | 693.6  | 35.769  | 0.00 |
|                      | Error  Linear | 213.300 | 11 | 19.39  | 0.01    |      |
| Marriage Relation    | Sessions Linear | 24    | 1  | 24     | 9.778   | 0.01 |
|                      | Error  Linear | 27    | 1  | 2.455  | 9.778   | 0.01 |
| Conflict Solving     | Sessions Linear | 63.375 | 1  | 63.375 | 0.045   | 0.001|
|                      | Error  Linear | 33.125 | 11 | 3.011  | 3.667   | 0.82 |
| Sexual Relation      | Sessions Linear | 9.375 | 1  | 9.375  | 3.667   | 19.062| 0.001|
|                      | Error  Linear | 28.125 | 11 | 2.557  | 4.042   |      |
| Marital Satisfaction | Sessions Linear | 77.042 | 1  | 77.042 | 19.062  | 0.001|
|                      | Error  Linear | 44.458 | 11 | 4.042  | 4.042   | 0.001|
The second hypothesis of the research suggesting that training sexual skill can increase marital satisfaction, regarding to using frequent measurement, the analysis of the scores of marital satisfaction during sessions and 3 months after conducting the study shows that in this case that includes emotions, beliefs, and view on the role of relations in the maintenance of marital relationship, F is significant and there is a linear trend. In order to study the effect of training sexual skill on the improvement of conflict solving ability which includes spouse’ view, emotions, and beliefs to acquire and enhance conflict solving ability, with regard to using frequent measurement, the analysis of the scores of conflict solving during the sessions and 3 months of following up shows that in this case, F is significant and there is a linear trend. In order to study the effect of training sexual skill on sexual satisfaction that includes one's desire to express emotions and a sense of ease to talk about sexual matters and being engaged in sexual intercourse, with regard to using frequent measurement, the analysis of the scores of sexual relation during the sessions and 3 months of following up shows that in this case, F is significant and there is a linear trend. In order to study the effect of training sexual skill on the increment of marital satisfaction that includes couples satisfaction, with regard to using frequent measurement, the analysis of the scores of marital satisfaction during the sessions and 3 months of following-up shows that in this case, F is significant and there is a linear trend.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Sexual need as one of the human natural needs is usually satisfied by a legal spouse. Agreement on the style and quality of sexual relation plays an important role in marital satisfaction. Different studies on marriage show that sexual problems remain at the first level of importance (Lanvis quoted from Shamloo, 1993; Modanlu et al., 2005; Gerhardstein, 1997). The results of this study show the significant effect of sexual training on positive emotions toward spouse, marriage relation, conflict solving, sexual relation, and marital satisfaction. In fact, training sexual skills has an important role on positive emotions and love of spouse, creating personal emotions and beliefs toward role of sexual relation in marriage continuity, increment of conflict solving, personal desire to express emotions and ease sense for sexual discussions and sexual intercourse, and increment of couples consent from marriage life. Findings of this study are compatible with findings of Hosseini, 2003; Baniasadi, 1996; Sherbaf et al., 2005; Bahreynian & Saki, 2003; Jafari et al., 2003; Mazur et al., 2002; Morokoff & Gilliland, 1993.

According to findings of this study, it is proposed that, as there is a course titled “Family Planning” at universities, there should be a course titled “Communication Skills” including all communication aspects and their important factors such as civil language, and fundamental principles of communication. Meanwhile, there should be a training program for couples that its certificate will be requested in marriage registry offices, and there should be expert consultants in consulting centers in order to train sexual skills.

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