OPEN PEER REVIEW

Open Peer Review (OPR)

As a new feature for progressing towards transparency, we decided to open a new window for all of our editors as well as authors titled "**Open Peer Review**". We hope by this new facility, our reviewers will be more motivated and authors will be more satisfied with the review process. We believe that publishing our peer review reports could make a transparent and clear environment for all our efforts within a journal, but not all reviewers tend to publish their comments.

What is "Open Peer Review" process?

An "Open Peer Review" process is making the details of all review process (including reviewers, associate editors, and EICs comments) as "Public" as it is agreed by EIC, Authors, and reviewers.

Advantages of "Open Peer Review" process

- More transparency, constructiveness and tactful comments of the peer review process: leads to an increase in the quality of reviews
- More motivations for all involved roles in the review process
- Authors' satisfactions from the review process: Increases honesty between authors and reviewers
- Education of both authors and new students
- Prevents reviewers from following their individual agendas and leading to the detection of reviewers' conflicts of interests

You can find out more at:
https://brieflands.com/briefland/knowledgebase/category/tree.html#opr.html

Middle East Journal of Rehabilitation and Health Studies
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Peer Review Report for "Comparing the Effectiveness of Behavioral Activation and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy in Cognitive-Attentional Syndrome in Patients with Depression"

Author(s): Sahar Amiri, Parvin Ehteshamzadeh, Fariba Hafezi, Mohammad Reza Borna

Review Timeline:

Submit Date:	19 Sep 2020
Revised Date:	6 Feb 2021
Accepted Date:	6 Feb 2021

Revision (0)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0)

13 Oct 2020

Dear AE,
Thanks to the authors for their efforts to provide more evidence on non-pharmaceutical therapies for patients with depression. I read the manuscript carefully and I am afraid to say in this shape, this manuscript has a lot of paucities which make the paper not strong enough to be accepted. Below the authors can find my comments that I think may help them to upgrade the manuscript.
- Be constant how you call the participants. I believe patients with depression is far more better than depressed people or ...!
- Your text need an editing. Some examples have been provided:
- Line 154: Do not start your sentence with abbreviation.
- lines 170-172: “In other words, the greater effect of ACT therapy on concerns and threatening and metacognitive beliefs motivating worry can be underlined by the immediate sedative properties of this technique in relieving emotional stress posed by rumination and concerns in these patients ” Not clear.
- Some parts of the manuscript need structuring: example: lines 74- 87 should be divided in paragraphs.

- Your title must be corrected because of mismatch and grammatical errors
- Your introduction just presents “what we know”; it has weaknesses in presenting “what we don’t know”, i.e. other studies in this field must be described and criticised properly.
- Lines 66-69: “Previous studies have revealed the effectiveness of BA in decreasing depressive symptoms (14, 15, 16) and CAS (17, 18, 19). The effectiveness of ACT in decreasing depressive symptoms was also confirmed in studies by A-Tjak et al. (20), Azizi and Qasemi (21), and Kazemini, Bakhtiari, and Nouri (22).” first: explain more of these studies especially the closest one/s to yours and criticize them; second: how about other countries? Are you sure there has NOT been any study in other counties with similar aim?
- Method:
- did you run the two approaches in parallel? Or you finished one, then started the other?
- did your sample have normal distribution? How did you check that out?
- Why did you have 45 participants? sample size calculation or justification?
- How did you divide the sample? Randomly?
- You have applied two different methods on human subject, did you have ethics approval and IRCT code?
- where did you run your therapy sessions?
- When did your therapy sessions take place? Morning or afternoon?
- why did you choose 8 sessions? How did you terminate the sessions?
- Both approaches had positive effects, even one had better outcomes than the other, and your control group did not have any, How did you resolve this ethical issue?
- Line 85: did you have training sessions? What were your purpose?
- Results:
- how many patients did you evaluate? And how many passed or eliminated?
- Where is your demographic information? We do know how SES, gender and education may change the effects of such treatments.
- did you check the relationship between demographic information and your treatment outcomes?
- any odd or undesirable outcomes?

Discussion:

- Please start your discussion with your main gain NOT repeating your aim.
- Line 173: where did in your paper talk about the five steps in BA?
- Why did you not compare your results with others?
- Where is your conclusion?
- Have a separate heading for limitation, then explain how your limitations affected the quality of your research.
- Lines 202- 205: “Moreover, in accordance with the findings of the present study, future research is suggested to adopt a combination of BA and ACT programs to reduce CAS in order to offer better and more sustainable results over time by eliminating the shortcomings of each technique.” How do you know the combination of these two approaches will produce better and more sustainable results over time?
- References:
- Some of your references have redundancy take them out.
- Be constant for journal names: some have been abbreviated some have not

Best of luck

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision (0)** 25 Oct 2020

Dear AE,
Comments for the authors:
- The abstract is long and should be summarized
- In the introduction, the author describes the research issue well, but does not mention its necessity and importance. What exactly was the purpose of comparing the two methods, act and BA? Behavioral approaches are the basis of all cognitive-behavioral therapies, including third-wave cognitive therapies. It is better for the author to describe the differences and advantages of each method and then state his hypotheses.
- Methods: This is a randomized trial. The pilot design should be further described. Specify how to sample and select the sample size
Was blinding performed in the research? how
- Research instruments: The author does not specify where he/she used BDI. It seems that only CAS1 test was used for data analysis.
- Are the assumptions of the Mancova met?
- Discussion:Well done. only one question: The CAS1 test seems to further assess factors that have been adapted from third-wave cognitive therapies (suchas ACT). Could this not be a reason for the difference between the results of the two treatments?
Thanks.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision (0)** 26 Oct 2020

Dear AE,
The authors have done a valuable job studying at the same time, some concerns emerge that if addressed, will help to strengthen the paper. They are as follows:
¬ Abstract:
Introduction:
Please clarify the importance of the study in the introduction.
Methods:
1. The investigators describe the allocation methods in this study for examples:
2. Allocation by the judgment of the clinician; Allocation by the preference of the participant; Allocation based on the results of a test or a series of tests or Allocation by the availability of the intervention. Please mention inclusion and exclusion criteria.
3. Specify the intervention of the control group.
4. There is Insufficient information about methods for blinding of participants and personnel of outcome assessments.
5. It is better to mention other statistical tests used in the study.
Results:
This section is very general and should be written more accurately.
Conclusion:
This section should be rewritten on the base of the aim of the study. It is better to focus on the more important issues in this section.
Keywords:
Check them all through MESH.
Introduction:
The aim and importance of the study are not clear.

Methods:

1. The allocation method of participants in the three groups is not clear.
2. How to control reporting bias due to selective outcome reporting, for example: Please explain who did the primary and secondary assessments.
3. Also explain by whom the interventions were performed.
4. No ethical approval was reported in this study.

Results:

1. Please mention the demographic characteristics of participants in a separate table.
2. There were no reports of the control group in this study.

Discussion:

Please mention the reason why there is no difference between the two treatments in this study in more detail.

Thanks.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision (0)** 27 Oct 2020

Dear EIC,

Our respected reviewers and I read this paper, and we believe the paper in this shape needs "MAJOR REVISION" before any concrete decision could be made. The reviewers' comments will be endorsed to help the authors in revising and editing.

All the best

Fatemeh Ehsani: EIC | **Revision (0)** 28 Oct 2020

Dear Authors

According to the Associated Editor and Reviewers comments, your article needs to be reviseed majorly.

Thanks.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your valuable and useful comments and suggestions. We have modified the manuscript accordingly. Revised sections are highlighted in the article and detailed corrections are listed below point by point:

- The title of the article was corrected.
- The importance of the study is clarified in the introduction.
- The sampling method was modified in the abstract.
- More details on statistical analysis methods were added to the abstract.
- The results were rewritten in the abstract.
- Conclusions were rewritten in the abstract.
- Keywords were rewritten according to (MeSH).
- Information was added to the introduction about the aims and importance of the study.
- A review of the results of previous studies was added to the introduction.
- More details about the sampling method and ethical considerations were added to the method section.
- The use of the Beck Depression Inventory was added to the inclusion criteria in the study.
- The method part was divided into several paragraphs.
- The method section was revised and the details considered by the reviewer were added to this section.
- Details of the assumptions of the MANCOVA were added to the results section.
- A comparison of experimental and control groups is provided in the results section.
- In the article, the term “patients with depression” was used instead of “depressed people”.
- The article was revised and the writing errors were corrected.
- Demographic characteristics of the participants were added to the results section.
- More about the effectiveness of ACT than BA was added to the discussion.
- The discussion section has been modified.
- The limitations section was added to the article.
- The conclusion section was added to the article.
- The references were corrected.

The manuscript has been resubmitted to your journal. We look forward to your positive response.

With best regards

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision (1)** 25 Dec 2020

Dear AE,

Thanks very much for the authors' efforts to make this manuscript better. However, some of my previous comments are still there. I believe to reach a concrete decision about the manuscript, they should step up and work a little bit more:

1- Your introduction just presented “what we know”; it has weaknesses in presenting “what we don’t know”, i.e. other studies in this field must be described and criticized properly.

2- Lines 66-69: “Previous studies have revealed the effectiveness of BA in decreasing depressive symptoms (14, 15, 16) and CAS (17, 18, 19). The effectiveness of ACT in decreasing depressive symptoms was also confirmed in studies by A-Tjak et al. (20), Azizi and Qasemi (21), and Kazemini, Bakhtiari, and Nouri (22).” first: explain more of these studies especially the closest one/s to yours and criticize them; second: how about other countries? Are you sure there has NOT been any study in other counties with a similar aim? Expand lines 70-76

3- You have applied two different methods to human subjects, did you have an IRCT code?

4- where (clinic? Hospital? Health centers?) did you run your therapy sessions?

5- When did your therapy sessions take place? Morning or afternoon?

6- why did you choose 8 sessions? How did you terminate the sessions?

7- Did you have training sessions? What was your purpose?

8- How many patients did you evaluate? And how many passed or eliminated?: you chose 45, how many patients did you have that this number agreed to participate, bring a total number.

9- We do know how SES and education may change the effects of such treatments. How did you evaluate the SES? What was the SES background of your patients?

In this revised manuscript:

Please consider all my comments with “please”

1- I do strongly advise you to have in-depth editing and revising since your manuscript has many parts that are difficult to follow.

2- Bring the exact p-values in your abstract.

3- Replace “so on” with proper words, it is not common in academic writing to bring “so on”.

4- “constructs” as it has been mentioned in line 42 is awkward, find a better replacement.

5- Line 45, you mentioned “large number studies” but only one reference, bring at least three references.

6- Line 57: “depressive disorder”??? find a better replacement.

7- Line 70: “Depressive symptoms”? Find a better replacement.

8- Lines 89-90: I think these lines have grammatical issues.
9- Line 108: what do you mean by “extensive”? did you offer more therapeutic sessions to the control group?
10- I believe lines 101-104 have been repeated in lines 130-132.
11- Would you clarify how you offered therapies: Individually or in group therapy? How many patients in each group (3? 5? …)
12- I think lines 142-156 should be in the Methods under the Statistics section.
13- The paragraph that was started in line 215, I think has a lot of similarities to the other 2 previous paragraphs. Merge them
14- In limitation: just tell what kind of limitation you have confronted and how this/these limitation/s affected the quality of your study.
• “The difficulty in coordinating the appropriate time for some participants to perform pre-test, intervention sessions, post-test, and two-month follow-up was one of the limitations of this study”: I do not think this is a limitation, but it is difficult to run a study.
• “Considering the limitations of the present study, especially the geographical limitation and the sample size as well as the lack of control on individual difference variables such as socioeconomic status and social support” Where and how have these kinds of limitations been explained?
• “The results of the present study showed that ACT and BA treatments were effective in cognitive attention syndrome in patients with depression.” Needs revision and edition.
15- Your references:
a. Ref. Num. 1: pages
b. Ref. Num. 4: pages
c. Ref. Num. 5: put a full stop after authors’ name.
d. Ref. Num. 11: is it a book or a journal?
e. Ref. Num. 15: ????
f. Ref. Num. 20: where are page numbers:
g. Ref. Num. 21: Journal names should be written in italic: TANAFFOS?! Check that out
h. Ref. Num. 25: Place that book was published?
i. Ref. Num. 29: pages
j. Ref. Num. 30: pages
GOOD LUCK

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision (1)** 26 Dec 2020

Dear AE,
Thanks for all the authors' efforts and acceptance of the journal's decision.
Best Regards

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision (1)** 28 Dec 2020

Dear AE,
Comments for the authors:
1. (Optional): Since it is a comparative study, it is better to change the title and add phrases such as a comparative study of... or the comparison of...
2. In Abstract; Given that the Beck scale has not been used in statistical analysis, it is not necessary to include it as a research tool in the abstract.

Thanks.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision (1)** 1 Jan 2021

Dear EIC,
All our respected reviewers and I read the revised version and we believe the manuscript is in better condition now. However, one reviewer raised some concerns that I agree with. The authors should consider those issues and then resubmit their paper for the last decision.
Looking forward to seeing the final version of the manuscript,
Thanks.

Fatemeh Ehsani: EIC | **Revision (1)** 6 Jan 2021

Dear Authors
According to the reviewer and associate editor's comments, your article still needs to be revised fundamentally. Please also edit the manuscript natively.
Thanks.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (2)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your valuable and useful comments and suggestions. We have modified the manuscript accordingly. Revised sections are highlighted in the article and detailed corrections are listed below point by point:

- The title of the article was corrected.
- The research tool was modified in the abstract.
- Exact p-values were presented in the abstract.
- The introduction was revised and expanded.
- Due to the limited number of words in this magazine, we tried to provide more concise content.
- The study was approved by the Ethical Committee of Islamic Azad University-Ahvaz Branch (code: IR.IAU.AHVAZ.REC.1399.009).
- More details about the place and time of the intervention program were added to the method section.
- Eight-session intervention programs were selected according to the references. Meetings were also held in this way to take advantage of the time.
- The description of the last sessions in the table is as follows:

“Providing a summary of treatment, in short, follow-up solutions, and feedbacks by the group members.”

“Reviewing and practicing the trained treatment techniques with an emphasis on regulating emotions and a sense of meaningfulness in the real world”

- In the present study, we examined the demographic characteristics of the participants, the results of which are shown in Table 1. Unfortunately, in this study, other socio-economic characteristics of the participants were not studied, which is one of the limitations of the present study.
- We reviewed the article to correct the writing flaws and corrected flaws.
- References were reviewed and corrected

The manuscript has been resubmitted to your journal. We look forward to your positive response.

With best regards

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (2)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (2) 19 Jan 2021

Dear AE,
I am happy that this manuscript is in the academic situation right now, although my main concern is still there. This manuscript needs EDITING. I hope the authors can manage the manuscript edition by a well-known institute or a native English tongue person.
All the best

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (2) 19 Jan 2021

Dear EIC,
My respected reviewers and I believe all the structural problems have been resolved however this paper needs editing. We hope the authors can clear this issue asap, and we will give our final decision on this edited manuscript.
All the best

Fatemeh Ehsani: EIC | **Revision** (2) 20 Jan 2021

Dear Author,
Thank you so much to improve the quality of manuscript. Your manuscript should be edit natively to allow for publication. We suggest you that send your manuscript for native English editing center.
Thanks.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (3)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your useful comments and suggestions on the language and the structure of our manuscript. We have modified the manuscript accordingly, and the detailed corrections are listed below point by point:

- ✓ We revised the manuscript carefully to avoid language errors. In addition, we asked several colleagues who are skilled authors to check the English. We believe that the language is now acceptable for the reviewer.

The manuscript has been resubmitted to your journal. We look forward to your positive response.

Best Regards

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (3)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision** (3) 2 Feb 2021

Dear EIC,
Thanks to the authors very much for their hardworking and efforts to increase the quality of the manuscript. To make the process faster, I read this paper personally and I believe it has better academic writing right now. The only minor issue is reference number 23. Please be aware to correct its issues before the manuscript goes for the final check.
I leave the final decision on our Editors in Chief.
Looking forward to furthering cooperation

Fatemeh Ehsani: EIC | **Revision** (3) 3 Feb 2021

Dear Authors
Thank you so much for improving the quality of the article. However, it is necessary to check the references of the manuscript and consider the note of the associate editor. In addition, please explain the abbreviations of each table, below it. Also, please add the 95% confidence interval of mean differences for table 6.
Thanks.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (4)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your useful comments and suggestions on the language and the structure of our manuscript. We have modified the manuscript accordingly, and the detailed corrections are listed below point by point:

- ✓ Reference No. 23 was amended.
- ✓ The abbreviations of each table were added below it.
- ✓ The 95% confidence interval of mean differences is added in Table 6.

The manuscript has been resubmitted to your journal. We look forward to your positive response.

Best Regards

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (4)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

Fatemeh Ehsani: EIC | **Revision** (4) 6 Feb 2021

Dear Author,

We are pleased to inform you that your article is accepted for publication in the MEJRHS.

We hope to receive the other qualified articles from your group.

Thanks.