

OPEN PEER REVIEW

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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 "[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.

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- 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

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Middle East Journal of Rehabilitation and Health Studies

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Peer Review Report for "Effective Interventions for Social-Psychological Rehabilitation in Addiction Recovery: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis"

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Review Timeline:

Submit Date:	19 Apr 2025
Revised Date:	14 Jul 2025
Accepted Date:	26 Jul 2025

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

24 Apr 2025

Dear Associate Editor

In this study, the authors examines the Effective interventions for social-psychological Rehabilitation in Addiction Recovery. While I appreciate that it is interesting, there are some improvements required to ensure that the information presented in scientifically sound. Specifically, the comments are as follows:

1. The introduction section is inadequate and fails to articulate the necessity of this investigation. Kindly revise this section.
2. What are the exclusion criteria for this review?

3. The study population should be taken into account by authors when developing their search strategy.
4. Authors should include 2025 articles in the study.
5. The results in the Discussion section were not well organized by the authors; therefore, it is necessary to rewrite this section.
6. Please revise the English language of your manuscript.

REFeree : Reviewer

9 May 2025

Dear Editor

My comments:

Line 12: The sentence "Three main categories, there were identified..." is grammatically incorrect. This is better; "Three main categories were identified..."

Line 12: "10 Studies included in review and 6 Studies included in Meta-analysis."

Rewrite more formally and coherently: "Ten studies were included in the systematic review, and six in the meta-analysis."

Line 13: "Three main categories, there were identified..." This is better; "Three main categories were identified based on the interventional studies..."

Line 30: "Key words" is incorrectly written as two separate words. Should be written correctly as: "Keywords:"

Line 70: The question "Does social and psychological rehabilitation effect on recovery in addiction groups?" is grammatically incorrect. This is better; "Does social and psychological rehabilitation affect recovery among individuals with addiction?"

The inclusion/exclusion criteria are briefly stated. Provide clearer explanations about: Why 31 out of 41 assessed articles were excluded? Or Whether tools for evaluating methodological quality were consistently used (beyond Table 2)

Some entries lack data such as mean age or participant gender. Review the table carefully and fill in missing information for consistency and clarity.

Line 163 and onward: Some studies are repeated with identical results. Remove duplicate entries or consolidate them into a single row.

Lines 263–264: A high SMD of 1.25 with a 95% CI including zero (–0.576 to 3.086) shows statistical contradiction. Add a clearer explanation in the discussion section to address this inconsistency.

The conclusion "overall psychological rehabilitation does not show a statistically significant impact..." may be misleading, as certain therapies (e.g., CFT) were

effective. Revise this part to reflect the difference between specific interventions (like CFT) and general psychological rehabilitation.

Sections such as "Ethical Approval," "Informed Consent," and "Clinical Trial Registration Code" are left blank. These sections should be completed or clarified regarding why the information is missing.

Throughout the manuscript, improper capitalization (e.g., "Effective" mid-sentence), grammatical errors, and non-scientific phrasing are present. A full language and academic editing by a native English scientific editor is strongly recommended.

REFEREE : Associate Editor

17 May 2025

Dear EIC,

The reviewers reviewed the article. all reviewers gave a definite opinion on the major revision of the article.

Thanks

Fatemeh Ehsani : EIC

19 May 2025

Dear Authors

According to the reviewers and associate editor's comments, your article needs to be revised majorly. When revising your manuscript, please consider all issues mentioned in the reviewers' comments carefully: please outline every change made in response to their comments and submit the required files up two months.

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.

Reviewer 1:

-Line 12: The sentence "Three main categories, there were identified..." is grammatically incorrect. This is better; "Three main categories were identified..." *we change in to "Three main categories were identified..."*.

-Line 12: "10 Studies included in review and 6 Studies included in Meta-analysis." *we change in to "Ten studies were included in the systematic review, and six in the meta-analysis."*

-Rewrite more formally and coherently: "Ten studies were included in the systematic review, and six in the meta-analysis." *we change in to "Ten studies were included in the systematic review, and six in the meta-analysis."*

-Line 13: "Three main categories, there were identified..." This is better; "Three main categories were identified based on the interventional studies..." *we change in to "Three main categories were identified based on the interventional studies..."*.

-Line 30: "Key words" is incorrectly written as two separate words. Should be written correctly as: "Keywords:" *we change in to "Keywords"*

-Line 70: The question "Does social and psychological rehabilitation effect on recovery in addiction groups?" is grammatically incorrect. This is better; "Does social and psychological rehabilitation affect recovery among individuals with addiction?" *we change in to " Does social and psychological rehabilitation affect recovery among individuals with addiction?"*.

-The inclusion/exclusion criteria are briefly stated. *Thanks for the valuable comment. The entry and exit criteria were explained in more detail.*

-Provide clearer explanations about: Why 31 out of 41 assessed articles were excluded?

Reasons for Article Exclusion:

Not meeting the inclusion criteria, including:

Study population (e.g., participants who were not addicted individuals)

Type of intervention (studies lacking social or psychosocial rehabilitation interventions)

Absence of a comparison group or pre- and post-intervention data

Not reporting relevant outcomes related to social or psychological recovery

Inappropriate study design (such as reviews, case reports, or studies without a control group)

-Or Whether tools for evaluating methodological quality were consistently used (beyond Table 2). *We explain for this comment in (2.4- Risk of bias (quality) assessment) section.*

-Some entries lack data such as mean age or participant gender. Review the table carefully and fill in missing information for consistency and clarity.

Thank you for your attention to detail. It should be noted that information such as mean age was not reported by the authors in some of the included articles and was therefore unavailable. For this reason, these items have been marked as “Not Reported” (NR) in the table.

Additionally, assessing the gender of participants was not among the primary objectives of this study. Scientific evidence indicates that although there are differences between men and women in terms of substance use tendencies and social consequences, gender alone is not a determining factor in the success of psychosocial rehabilitation interventions. The main focus of this study was on the effectiveness of interventions regardless of gender.

Recent studies also emphasize that psychosocial factors and the quality of the therapeutic relationship play a more significant role in treatment success than gender.

The studies suggest that gender either has no effect on treatment initiation or, if it has an effect, women are more likely than men to initiate treatment.

Reference: Green, C.A. Gender and Use of Substance Abuse Treatment Services. Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy, 2006; 29(1), 55–64.

-Line 163 and onward: Some studies are repeated with identical results. Remove duplicate entries or consolidate them into a single row. We merged the results in tow duplicated studies: (Yazdanbakhsh, 2019) and (Forghani, 2021).

-Lines 263–264: A high SMD of 1.25 with a 95% CI including zero (–0.576 to 3.086) shows statistical contradiction. Add a clearer explanation in the discussion section to address this inconsistency.

We added this text in to limitation section in the discussion section: “one of the main limitations of this meta-analysis was the substantial heterogeneity and imprecision among the included studies, which resulted in a wide confidence interval and lack of statistical significance for the pooled effect. Therefore, the overall effect size should be interpreted with caution”.

Reference: Borenstein M, Higgins JP, Hedges LV, Rothstein HR. Basics of meta-analysis: I² is not an absolute measure of heterogeneity. Research synthesis methods. 2017;8(1):5-18.

-The conclusion "overall psychological rehabilitation does not show a statistically significant impact..." may be misleading, as certain therapies (e.g., CFT) were effective. Revise this part to reflect the difference between specific interventions (like CFT) and general psychological rehabilitation.

Thank you for your valuable comment. We agree that the original conclusion may be misleading. We have revised the conclusion to clarify that, while overall psychological rehabilitation did not show a statistically significant impact, specific interventions such as compassion-focused therapy (CFT) demonstrated a strong and significant effect. This distinction has now been clearly reflected in the revised conclusion.

-Sections such as "Ethical Approval," "Informed Consent," and "Clinical Trial Registration Code" are left blank. These sections should be completed or clarified regarding why the information is missing. Thank you for your comment. As this study is a systematic review and meta-analysis based solely on published data and does not involve the collection of new data from human participants, ethical approval, informed consent, and clinical trial registration are not required according to current international guidelines. We have clarified this point in the relevant sections of the submission process.

Throughout the manuscript, improper capitalization (e.g., "Effective" mid-sentence), grammatical errors, and non-scientific phrasing are present. A full language and academic editing by a native English scientific editor is strongly recommended.

Thank you for your valuable feedback. We appreciate your suggestion and have carefully revised the manuscript for proper capitalization, grammar, and scientific phrasing. Additionally, the manuscript has been reviewed by a native English scientific editor to ensure clarity and academic quality.

Reviewer 2:

In this study, the authors examines the Effective interventions for social-psychological Rehabilitation in Addiction Recovery. While I appreciate that it is interesting, there are some improvements required to ensure that the information presented in scientifically sound. Specifically, the comments are as follows:

1. The introduction section is inadequate and fails to articulate the necessity of this investigation. Kindly revise this section.

Thank you for your constructive feedback regarding the introduction section. We appreciate your suggestion and have revised the introduction to more clearly articulate the necessity and rationale for this investigation (in the end of introduction section).

2. What are the exclusion criteria for this review? We added the exclusion criteria for this review.

3. The study population should be taken into account by authors when developing their search strategy.

Thank you for your comment. We agree that considering the study population is essential when developing a systematic review search strategy. In our study, we clearly defined the target population (individuals with substance use disorders undergoing social-psychological rehabilitation) and incorporated relevant population-related keywords and subject headings into our search strategy to ensure comprehensive and focused retrieval of studies. We have clarified this point in the methods section, as recommended in systematic review guidelines.

4. Authors should include 2025 articles in the study.

Thank you for your comment. We agree that including the most recent literature is important for the comprehensiveness and relevance of a systematic review. In our study, we updated our search strategy to include articles published up to 2025. All studies meeting the predefined inclusion criteria, regardless of publication year, were considered for inclusion. The eligibility criteria, including publication years covered, have been clearly stated in the methods section in accordance with PRISMA guidelines.

5. The results in the Discussion section were not well organized by the authors; therefore, it is necessary to rewrite this section. We have added sections in the form of several paragraphs in various parts of the manuscript.

6. Please revise the English language of your manuscript.

Thank you for your valuable feedback, the manuscript has been reviewed by a native English scientific editor to ensure clarity and academic quality.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

REFeree : Reviewer

16 Jul 2025

All comments have been properly taken into account.

REFeree : Reviewer

23 Jul 2025

It's OK for publication.

REFeree : Associate Editor

26 Jul 2025

Dear EIC,
The authors of the article have made the necessary corrections and the article has been modified based on the opinions of the reviewers and has been raised to an acceptable level for acceptance. The article is currently acceptable for publication.
Thanks.

Fatemeh Ehsani : EIC

26 Jul 2025

Dear Authors
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.
Best Regards