

## Effect of Psychotherapy on psychological and Behavioral Disturbances among Drug Addicts in Saudi Arabia

*Abdel-Mawgoud M. and Moftah A..*

### Abstract

A total of 45 patients with the diagnosis of alcohol and/or drug dependence were studied for the efficacy psychological interventions in reducing their psychological and behavioral disturbances. The disturbance were measured using three scales namely the Depression Symptomatology Scale, the Symptom Inventory and the Multiple Affect Adjective Check List. Each patient was assessed twice before and after completion of their treatment. The overall results indicate a major improvement in all areas of the three scales. The difference of scores before and after treatment was found to be highly statistically significant with  $p < 0.001$ . The results are discussed in the light of the needs to change the attitude in the Arab world towards addiction and the role of psychological treatment.

**Introduction:** Treatment of chemical dependency is still as controversial as it has always been. Competition among models exists because there is little consensus among those working in this area as to how best prevent or treat the problem. The treatment approaches have been fixed or static. although some basic principles have stood the test of time, there has been growth and evolution in how we think about and treat chemical dependence.

There has been three major waves of knowledge and methodology applied to chemical dependency treatment.

The first wave started in 1935 when the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous was formed by Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith in Akron, Ohio. their philosophy, steps and traditions conceptualized alcoholism as a physical disease that affects body, mind and the spirit of its victim. (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1953, 1955 and 1976).

The second wave is the Minnesota model of treatment which integrated

Medical and Psychological approaches and the Alcoholics Anonymous steps and philosophy. It began at the Pioneer House in 1948 and Wilmar State Hospital in 1950. The system relies on an inpatient treatment for 28 days followed by a loosely structures aftercare. The core ideas of Minnesota model assumes the existence of alcoholism as an illness that is no one's fault, and which is multi-phase, chronic and primary, the initial motivation for treatment in unrelated to outcome, that education about the illness should start in the community and that alcohol and other psychoactive substance are mod alerting and can create a harmful chemical dependence. (Mann, 1979 and Anderson 1981).

The third wave started in the early 1980's with the emergence of the Central of Applied science's (SCENES) Bio-Psycho-Social model. The system considers chemical dependence as a disease due to complex interaction of biological, psychological and social factors that follows a special course of recovery and relapse. The CENAPS model relies on the cybernetic nature of human beings i.e.

their capabilities of self regulating short term corrections aiming to long term stability. It integrates the Alcoholics Anonymous, the Minnesota and the Bio-Psycho-Social models of illness and recovery. (Gorski T.,1986, Martin, 1986 and Downing C., 1989)

The place of psychological interventions in treatment addicts has also developed over the years. Some psychologists have opposed the AA model of recovery for reasons ranging from its "incompatibility" with psychotherapy to its emphasis on the disease concept. Margolis reviewed the research supporting the biological role in addiction and argues that psychologists must become more accepting of the 12-step programs as the research indicates that craving for alcohol or drugs involves abnormalities in the reward system in the mesolimbic area of the brain. This, along with the research from adoption and twin studies that support genetic link to alcoholism should force psychologists to accept these types of recovery programs and integrate them into practice. (Margolis R.D., 1993)

There is a strong association between addiction and the co-existence of other psychopathology. Shaw and his colleagues found that 37% of their sample were suffering from depression and 26% from psychosomatic manifestations. (Shaw B.L., et al, 1979). Steer and Schut found 35% depressed and 23.3% with high score of hostility. (Steer R.E. and Schut J., 1979) Khantzian and Treece found that 93% of drug addicts have diagnosable psychiatric disorder. Affective and personality disorders were the most commonly diagnosed (Khantzian E.J. and Treece C.,1985). Marsh found high scores of anxiety, dysthymia and personality disorders, especially the antisocial among drug addicts (Marsh D.T., 1988).

Studies among Arab patients also reflect similar trends. Akabawi and his colleagues found 33% of their patients suffer from anxiety and depression and 50% of personality disorder (Akabawi A.S., et al, 1984). Others found strong association between addiction, depression, hostility and psychopathy (Abdel-Salam F., 1976. Al-Sheikh A.S.,1988 and Abdel-Baki S., 1992).

The efficacy of the different modalities of psychotherapy have been tested in several studies. Drug-counseling, expressive-supportive psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral psychotherapy as well as deep analytic psychotherapy have been studied both in groups as well as on individuals basis. The overall results indicate that patients experienced significant improvement in rating of psychopathological symptoms as well as social functioning even in those with severe associated psychiatric disorder. Those with personality disorders did not show any improvement (Willett E.A., 1973; Rounsaville B.J. et al, 1981; Woody G.E. et al,1990; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1983; Rounsaville B.J. et al, 1986 and Woody G.E. et al, 1990). No similar studies (to our knowledge) were done in the Arab world. The aim of this study is to evaluate the effect of non-pharmacological interventions on the psychological and behavioral disturbances among Saudi addicts.

**Study Description:** This study was conducted at Al-Amal hospital, Dammam which is a highly specialized 280 bedded hospital for treatment of chemical dependency. The hospital provides a comprehensive treatment program based on a modified Bio-Psycho-Social model in the context of the 12 steps program of AA and its interface with Islam and Saudi Culture. The hospital program defines Chemical dependence as a chronic, pro-

gressive and eventually fatal disease with a tendency towards relapse, being a prime example of a chronic, life style related illness and is organized to provide care in three different units tailored to suit the patients needs as they progress in treatment. The first is the assessment and detoxification unit, in which patients spend an average of 7-10 days. The second is the short term rehabilitation which is run on therapeutic community lines aiming at restructuring patient's life in a drug free environment. The patient spend an average 1-2 month in this unit attending daily community meetings, group and individual sessions, educational lecture, religious group as well as participating in pre-selected recreational activities. The third phase is called continued care service that help patients to resettle in their environment and to maintain their recovery on outpatient basis (Abdel- Mawgoud M. et al, 1995)

**Sample:** All patients transferred from acute unit to the short term rehabilitation (STR) unit during the period from June 1, 1994 to august 31, 1994 were considered for the study. Those who signed the consent form, diagnosed as suffering from alcohol and/or drug dependence according to the DSM-III-R criteria (APA, 1987) have successfully completed their detoxification were included in the study. Patients with either physical or psychiatric conditions that required drug therapy with psychotropic medication were excluded from the study.

**Material and methods:** To evaluate the effect of psychotherapy on psychological and behavioral disturbances among addicts, patients were assessed twice using three different rating scales for depression, anxiety, hostility as well as the level of psychiatric symptomatology. The first assessment was done on the first day of patients transfer from acute

unit to STR unit while the second assessment was done before patients discharge after 6-8 weeks of treatment. The three scales used were:

1) *The depression symptomatology scale:* Which consists of 19 items that have been used widely in research on depression symptomatology. It follows a multidimensional concept derived by Schwab from the work of Abraham, Freud, Rado, Fenichel, Bibring and others (Schwarb et al, 1981 and Ibrahim R.M., 1992).

2) *The symptom inventory:* Compromises 28 items selected by Abdel-Sattar Ibrahim from major psychological tests of psychopathology such as the Minnesota Multiple Personality Inventory (MMIP) and Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ). The test was validated in Arabic culture. Items in this inventory reflect a number of major psychiatric manifestations such as sleep disturbance, social withdrawal, hallucinations, delusional thinking and drug abuse (Ibrahim A. and Alnafie A., 1991).

3) *The Multiple Affect Adjective Check List (MAACL):* This is a 89 items scale which yields scores for hostility, depression and anxiety (Zuckerman M. and Lubin B., 1965). The three scales were translated to standard Arabic which was further modified to the local Saudi dialect. They were, then, tested for consistency and stability. The mean correlation on the three scales was 0.78, indicating a level well above accepted standards (Ibrahim A. and Alnafie A., 1991).

All the three scales were re-tested again for the purpose of our study as the original standardization was done on a presumably normal population. A sample of 30 inpatients were randomly selected and was used to test scales reliability using the split half technique.

**Table (1) Individuals Patients Scores**

| Patient No | Depression Symptomatology Scale |       | Symptom Inventory |       | Multiple Affect Adjective Check List (MAACL) |       |         |       |            |       |
|------------|---------------------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|----------------------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|------------|-------|
|            |                                 |       |                   |       | Hostility                                    |       | Anxiety |       | Depression |       |
|            | Before                          | After | Before            | After | Before                                       | After | Before  | After | Before     | After |
| 1          | 43                              | 35    | 61                | 49    | 18                                           | 15    | 15      | 10    | 27         | 21    |
| 2          | 37                              | 34    | 56                | 49    | 12                                           | 8     | 15      | 12    | 23         | 19    |
| 3          | 45                              | 37    | 50                | 40    | 15                                           | 10    | 16      | 8     | 25         | 20    |
| 4          | 49                              | 40    | 58                | 45    | 13                                           | 10    | 15      | 10    | 28         | 19    |
| 5          | 35                              | 28    | 36                | 31    | 15                                           | 11    | 14      | 9     | 17         | 12    |
| 6          | 45                              | 38    | 60                | 52    | 14                                           | 2     | 17      | 13    | 25         | 18    |
| 7          | 35                              | 25    | 43                | 31    | 12                                           | 8     | 15      | 11    | 22         | 17    |
| 8          | 42                              | 35    | 62                | 50    | 12                                           | 9     | 17      | 14    | 24         | 20    |
| 9          | 42                              | 31    | 63                | 56    | 17                                           | 13    | 18      | 15    | 25         | 19    |
| 10         | 32                              | 25    | 43                | 35    | 13                                           | 9     | 13      | 9     | 20         | 16    |
| 11         | 50                              | 41    | 70                | 59    | 13                                           | 13    | 18      | 13    | 27         | 23    |
| 12         | 43                              | 33    | 56                | 50    | 15                                           | 10    | 15      | 10    | 21         | 17    |
| 13         | 52                              | 43    | 50                | 35    | 13                                           | 11    | 17      | 14    | 25         | 20    |
| 14         | 38                              | 28    | 61                | 45    | 10                                           | 7     | 16      | 14    | 19         | 15    |
| 15         | 32                              | 23    | 44                | 35    | 8                                            | 10    | 16      | 13    | 20         | 15    |
| 16         | 33                              | 27    | 33                | 25    | 17                                           | 13    | 11      | 8     | 18         | 12    |
| 17         | 31                              | 22    | 58                | 50    | 18                                           | 12    | 10      | 5     | 15         | 11    |
| 18         | 30                              | 25    | 49                | 42    | 12                                           | 8     | 12      | 10    | 12         | 8     |
| 19         | 37                              | 29    | 43                | 33    | 12                                           | 10    | 9       | 9     | 24         | 18    |
| 20         | 50                              | 44    | 64                | 60    | 14                                           | 13    | 10      | 8     | 19         | 16    |
| 21         | 39                              | 32    | 42                | 37    | 7                                            | 7     | 12      | 9     | 19         | 14    |
| 22         | 27                              | 28    | 43                | 35    | 9                                            | 7     | 16      | 15    | 15         | 13    |
| 23         | 30                              | 30    | 44                | 43    | 15                                           | 17    | 18      | 19    | 17         | 15    |
| 24         | 37                              | 30    | 50                | 42    | 19                                           | 12    | 18      | 14    | 26         | 17    |
| 25         | 31                              | 29    | 40                | 33    | 14                                           | 9     | 14      | 9     | 19         | 12    |
| 26         | 38                              | 30    | 43                | 36    | 18                                           | 11    | 17      | 15    | 18         | 14    |
| 27         | 39                              | 29    | 41                | 36    | 15                                           | 12    | 14      | 11    | 19         | 15    |
| 28         | 33                              | 31    | 41                | 35    | 13                                           | 11    | 17      | 14    | 16         | 16    |
| 29         | 39                              | 32    | 56                | 47    | 12                                           | 9     | 18      | 13    | 22         | 13    |
| 30         | 50                              | 4     | 70                | 62    | 4                                            | 6     | 18      | 14    | 22         | 17    |
| 31         | 40                              | 27    | 60                | 48    | 6                                            | 4     | 14      | 8     | 20         | 14    |
| 32         | 47                              | 42    | 60                | 49    | 14                                           | 10    | 14      | 14    | 30         | 25    |
| 33         | 30                              | 24    | 32                | 25    | 17                                           | 12    | 12      | 7     | 18         | 13    |
| 34         | 38                              | 28    | 55                | 45    | 10                                           | 7     | 14      | 19    | 20         | 14    |
| 35         | 32                              | 24    | 44                | 32    | 12                                           | 8     | 12      | 11    | 18         | 12    |
| 36         | 39                              | 33    | 41                | 35    | 13                                           | 7     | 14      | 8     | 21         | 17    |
| 37         | 35                              | 32    | 34                | 28    | 7                                            | 4     | 14      | 12    | 19         | 17    |
| 38         | 31                              | 21    | 41                | 28    | 9                                            | 7     | 14      | 9     | 17         | 13    |
| 39         | 34                              | 27    | 45                | 35    | 6                                            | 6     | 18      | 14    | 21         | 17    |
| 40         | 32                              | 30    | 35                | 27    | 8                                            | 6     | 12      | 10    | 15         | 13    |
| 41         | 46                              | 34    | 62                | 54    | 13                                           | 8     | 16      | 19    | 30         | 22    |
| 42         | 51                              | 40    | 65                | 53    | 10                                           | 8     | 14      | 8     | 32         | 25    |
| 43         | 41                              | 27    | 47                | 40    | 6                                            | 4     | 9       | 7     | 22         | 18    |
| 44         | 35                              | 30    | 46                | 32    | 13                                           | 10    | 10      | 7     | 20         | 15    |
| 45         | 49                              | 42    | 59                | 50    | 18                                           | 15    | 19      | 15    | 28         | 24    |

**Table (2) Depression Symptomatology Scale**

| Variable         | Before treatment | After treatment | "t" value | P      |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------|--------|
|                  | Mean±SD          | Mean±SD         |           |        |
| Depression score | 38.7±6.8         | 31.4±6          | 5.4       | <0.001 |

**Table (3) The Symptom Inventory**

| Variable | Before treatment | After treatment | "t" value | P      |
|----------|------------------|-----------------|-----------|--------|
|          | Mean±SD          | Mean±SD         |           |        |
| Score    | 50±10.4          | 41.3±9.9        | 4.13      | <0.001 |

**Table (4) Multiple Affect Adjective Check List (MAACL)**

| Variable   | Before treatment | After treatment | "t" value | P      |
|------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------|--------|
|            | Mean±SD          | Mean±SD         |           |        |
| Hostility  | 12.5±3.7         | 9.5±2.9         | 4.12      | <0.001 |
| Anxiety    | 14.6±2.7         | 11.3±3.2        | 5.4       | <0.001 |
| Depression | 21.3±4.5         | 16.5±3.8        | 5.5       | <0.001 |

Spearman's correlation of 0.80 for Depression Symptomatology, 0.84 for Symptom Inventory and 0.76 for the MAACL was found. The validity of the scale was tested using both empirical and intrinsic validity, being the methods of choice (Al-Saeed F.A., 1986). The overall result showed a validity of 0.89 for the depression Scale 0.91 for the Symptom Inventory and 0.87 for the MAACL which indicated that the 3 questionnaires were closely associated with the pattern of symptoms and disturbances that they were expected to measure.

**Results:** A total of 110 patients were transferred to STR unit during the study period. Only 62 were found to fit the study criteria of which 45 patients only completed the study. The sample was found to be highly representative for the type of population seen at Al-Amal hospital in all socio-demographic variables. The age range was 24-30 years and the number of previous admissions were 3-5. Each patient was allowed 2-4 therapeutic passes during the period of treatment. The complete assessment of patients required 2-4 sessions of 30 minutes each. All patients were attending six treatment sessions daily.

Table (1) summarizes the score of each patient on all the three scales while tables (2), (3) and (4) display the results of the mean score, the difference before and after treatment as well as the statistical significance of this difference.

**Discussion:** The aim of the study was to evaluate the effect of psychological treatment on psychological and behavioral disturbance of patients as reflected in their depressive, anxiety, hostility and psychiatric symptomatology scores.

The scales used to measure disturbance before and after treatment have been used world wide (Bloom P. and

Brady P., 1986; Herron E.W., 1969; Chapman J.S., 1970; Clin D.W. and Chosy J.J., 1970) Gritz E.R. et al 1975 and Schwab et al, 1981). They also have been translated and standardized on Arabic speaking populations (Khalil A.M. and Eysenck S.B.J., 1983 and Ibrahim A.S. and Alnafie A. 1991). In addition, the three were re-tested on a sample of 30 Saudi drug addicts with more than acceptable levels of reliability and validity.

Our overall results indicate an improvement of the scores in all of depressive, anxiety, and hostility as well as psychiatric symptomatology with a  $p < 0.001$  and is in line with other International studies (Willett E.A., 1973; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1983; Rounsaville et al., 1986 and Woody et al., 1990). It also supports the argument for the importance and the compatibility of psychotherapy with psychiatric patients in the Arab world (Ibrahim A.S. and Ibrahim R.M., 1993).

The effect demonstrated in our study is non specific to a special type of therapy. All our patients were attending the seven daily treatment sessions including individual psychotherapy, group and family therapy, educational session, community meeting, recovery group as well as group recreational activities. It was, therefore, rather difficult to identify which type of therapy was more useful to which type of patients. Some researchers were able to go further to study the correlation between the type of psychotherapeutic intervention and patterns of patients most likely to respond to it. Rounsaville and Kleber in their search for the strategy for therapy found that for an outpatient drug free programs, intensive inpatients psychotherapy is the best treatment for new patients, clients recently discharged from intensive inpatients programs or jail, and temporarily

relapsed patients. For narcotic antagonists). For maintenance group, family therapy was the most valuable (Rounsaville B.J. and Kleber H.D., 1985). Others tried to tackle the very difficult problem of motivation. Madert described a residential motivational therapy approach that relies on minicontracts and reality-oriented confrontation of behavioral issues to increase addicts awareness of his or her desperation and lack of fulfillment in life and to offer an attractive models of living and the experience of warmth and bondness in the group (Madert Klaus K., 1984).

These types of research is desperately needed both internationally and in our culture so that we can have better understanding for our patients as well as the therapeutic tools that are mostly likely to help them.

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### Authors

**Abdel-Mawgoud M.**  
Medical Director

**Moftah A.A.**  
Head of dept. of Psychology

### Address of correspondance

Al Amal Hospital Dammam.  
P.O.Box, 5054, Dammam, 31422,  
Saudi Arabia

## تأثير العلاج النفسي على الاضطرابات النفسية والسلوكية على عينة من المدمنين في المملكة العربية السعودية

تتكون عينة البحث من ٤٥ مريضاً من المدمنين على الخمر والمخدرات، تمت الدراسة بهدف الوقوف على فعالية التدخلات العلاجية النفسية والسلوكية. وقد قيست هذه الاضطرابات بواسطة ثلاث مقاييس: مقياس الأعراض الاكتئابية، مقياس الأعراض السلوكية، وقائمة تحليل الصفات والمشاعر. طبقت على كل مريض قبل وبعد انتهائه من البرنامج العلاجي. وتشير النتائج بصفة عامة إلى تحسن كبير له دلالة على كل المقاييس. واتضح أن فروق الدرجات قد بلغ دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى ٠.٠٠١، وقد نوقشت النتائج في ضوء الاحتياجات الخاصة بتغيير الاتجاهات نحو الإدمان في العالم العربي وأهمية دور التدخلات العلاجية النفسية.

## **EPILEPTICS ARE ALLOWED TO FAST IF:**

- ☒ **The fits are under control.**
- ☒ **Anticonvulsant therapy is once or twice daily regimen.**
- ☒ **Hypoglycemia does not precipitate fits.**

**IT IS ADVISABLES TO LET PATIENTS  
LIVE A NORMAL LIFE WHENEVER  
POSSIBLE**

**SOHOUR SHOULD BE AS LATE AS  
POSSIBLE TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF  
HYPOGLYCEMIA**

**DECISION SHOULD BE TAKEN ON  
INDIVIDUAL BASIS AS DOCTORS ARE  
THE MOST RELIABLE PERSONS IN  
THE CONCERN**

Ciba-Geigy