Establishing Efficacy of Dialectical Behavioural Therapy for Reduction of Psychological Distress: A Feasibility Trial from Pakistan

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Abstract:

This study aimed to explore the efficacy of Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), in reducing Psychological Distress (Stress, Anxiety, Depression). DBT, initially developed for helping in managing emotional distress in borderline personality disorder (BPD), has now been adapted to be used for a wide variety of reasons related to emotional and psychological distress. A mix of quantitative and qualitative approach was utilized to examine the efficacy of DBT via a single-arm-feasibility trial. A 4-week DBT skills training session for psychology students enrolled in the intern program at a government hospital was conducted. The feasibility of DBT intervention and its efficacy in reducing psychological distress were assessed through quantitative assessment, which was analyzed through a paired sample t-test. A qualitative assessment was also conducted through interviews and Thematic Analysis (TA). A qualitative assessment was also conducted through interviews and Thematic Analysis (TA). Results showed that DBT intervention led to a reduction in Stress and Depression from pre-training to post training. A reduction in Anxiety was present but statistically insignificant. Participants expressed a generally positive experience with DBT in reducing their distress, with some limitations and conditions for effectiveness also being emphasized. The findings suggest that providing informed training of the DBT modules acts as an impactful method in managing psychological distress in daily life and, with some consistency, may have a significant impact on future emotional regulation and communication skills.

Keywords:

Dialectical Behavioural Therapy, DBT, Psychological Distress, Efficacy, Emotional Regulation, Mental Health, Mindfulness, Depression, Anxiety.