

Clinical Trial Protocol

Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

19 Sep 2026

Comparing the effects of challenge and interpretation in treating patients with social anxiety disorder by intensive short-term dynamic psychotherapy; a process and outcome research

Protocol summary

Study aim

Comparing Challenge and Interpretation in Intensive Short-Term Dynamic Psychotherapy (ISTDP)

Design

A three-group randomized controlled trial design was used. The participants were patients with DSM-5 SAD determined by a diagnostic interview. Notices offering involvement in research were circulated throughout the university to attract participants. The volunteer participants, who had the entrance criteria were randomly assigned to one of three groups using the selection of one from 42 envelopes, including numbers of 1, 2, and 3; blinded to randomization (unaware if they had been randomized to which group). The three groups were standard ISTDP, no challenge ISTDP (NC-ISTDP) and a wait-list control.

Settings and conduct

The study was a therapeutic intervention, which was done in the treatment office of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Kurdistan; The participants, assigned to one of three groups using the selection of one from 42 envelopes, including numbers of 1, 2, and 3; blinded to randomization (unaware if they had been randomized to which group). The three groups were standard ISTDP, no challenge ISTDP (NC-ISTDP) and a wait-list control.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria: Social Anxiety Disorder, Student in the University of Kurdistan Exclusion criteria: history of psychosis, substance abuse, any simultaneous treatment for mental or somatic disorder

Intervention groups

Challenge Group Vs. Interpretation Group, and comparing the Control Group

Main outcome variables

The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale-Self-Report (LSAS-SR)- Persian version; Diagnostic interview based on the

DSM-5 criteria for SAD

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information

IRCT registration number: **IRCT20181208041890N1**

Registration date: **2019-09-16, 1398/06/25**

Registration timing: **retrospective**

Last update: **2019-09-16, 1398/06/25**

Update count: **0**

Registration date

2019-09-16, 1398/06/25

Registrant information

Name

Fateh Rahmani

Name of organization / entity

University of Kurdistan

Country

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Phone

+98 87 3366 4600

Email address

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Recruitment status

Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date

2015-01-21, 1393/11/01

Expected recruitment end date

2016-01-21, 1394/11/01

Actual recruitment start date

2015-04-04, 1394/01/15

Actual recruitment end date

2016-02-09, 1394/11/20

Trial completion date
2016-02-09, 1394/11/20

Scientific title
Comparing the effects of challenge and interpretation in treating patients with social anxiety disorder by intensive short-term dynamic psychotherapy; a process and outcome research

Public title
Challenging the role of challenge in intensive short-term dynamic psychotherapy for Social Anxiety Disorder: a randomized controlled trial

Purpose
Treatment

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria
Inclusion criteria:
Social Anxiety Disorder Student of the University of Kurdistan
Exclusion criteria:
History of Psychosis substance use Being under treatment

Age
From **18 years** old to **34 years** old

Gender
Both

Phase
N/A

Groups that have been masked
No information

Sample size
Target sample size: **41**
Actual sample size reached: **41**

Randomization (investigator's opinion)
Randomized

Randomization description
The volunteer participants, who had the entrance criteria were randomly assigned to one of three groups using the selection of one from 42 envelopes, including numbers of 1, 2, and 3; blinded to randomization (unaware if they had been randomized to which group). The three groups were standard ISTDP, no challenge ISTDP (NC-ISTDP) and a wait-list control.

Blinding (investigator's opinion)
Not blinded

Blinding description
Placebo
Not used

Assignment
Parallel

Other design features

Secondary Ids

empty

Ethics committees

1

Ethics committee

Name of ethics committee
National Committee of Ethics in Biomedical Researches

Street address
University of Kurdistan Street

City
Sanandaj

Province
Kurdistan

Postal code
66177-15175

Approval date
2018-12-12, 1397/09/21

Ethics committee reference number
IR.UOK.REC.1397.004

Health conditions studied

1

Description of health condition studied

Social Anxiety Disorder (Social Phobia)

ICD-10 code

F40.1

ICD-10 code description

Social Phobias

Primary outcomes

1

Description

The Subjects Score in The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale

Timepoint

Before-After Treatment and 6 Months Follow up

Method of measurement

The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale

Secondary outcomes

empty

Intervention groups

1

Description

The standard challenge-based central dynamic sequence of ISTDP including eight phases: Phase 1 (inquiry); Phase 2 (pressure); Phase 3 (challenge); Phase 4 (transference resistance); Phase 5 (direct access to the unconscious); Phase 6 (systematic analysis of the transference); Phase 7 (dynamic exploration into the unconscious); Phase 8 (consolidation). Standard ISTDP focused on accessing and experiencing the unconscious feelings through clarification, challenge to resistance and head on collision with resistance. For each group, a ten-session protocol of ISTDP for SAD was used. The first four sessions aimed at making the dynamic unconscious accessible. Sessions 5 to a maximum of eight focused on uncovering the pathogenic emotional forces underlying SAD through the ISTDP formulation of unprocessed

feelings and defenses leading to symptoms. Termination focused on ending the therapist-patient relationship.

Category

Treatment - Other

2

Description

The non-challenge-based central dynamic sequence of ISTDP including eight phases:Phase 1 (inquiry/preparation); Phase 2 (pressure); Phase 3 (interpretation/analysis); Phase 4 (transference resistance); Phase 5 (direct access to the unconscious); Phase 6 (systematic analysis of the transference); Phase 7 (dynamic exploration into the unconscious); Phase 8 (consolidation/analysis). The non-challenge-based ISTDP used clarification, recapitulation, and head on collision but did not use challenge. For each group, a ten-session protocol of ISTDP for SAD was used. The first four sessions aimed at making the dynamic unconscious accessible. Sessions 5 to a maximum of eight focused on uncovering the pathogenic emotional forces underling SAD through the ISTDP formulation of unprocessed feelings and defenses leading to symptoms. Termination focused on ending the therapist-patient relationship.

Category

Treatment - Other

3

Description

Control group: The Control Group; this group receive no intervention until the end of treatment. Then they underwent treatment for ethical reasons, But, the results were not considered in the research.

Category

N/A

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center

Name of recruitment center

The University of Kurdistan, Recall from Students

Full name of responsible person

Fateh Rahmani

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University Street

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Sponsors / Funding sources

1

Sponsor

Name of organization / entity

University of Kurdistan

Full name of responsible person

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Grant name

Grant code / Reference number

Is the source of funding the same sponsor organization/entity?

No

Title of funding source

no

Proportion provided by this source

100

Public or private sector

Public

Domestic or foreign origin

Domestic

Category of foreign source of funding

empty

Country of origin

Type of organization providing the funding

Academic

Person responsible for general inquiries

Contact

Name of organization / entity

University of Kurdistan

Full name of responsible person

Fateh Rahmani

Position

Associate professor

Latest degree

Ph.D.

Other areas of specialty/work

Psychology

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Person responsible for scientific inquiries

Contact

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Position

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Latest degree

Ph.D.

Other areas of specialty/work

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Position

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Sharing plan

Deidentified Individual Participant Data Set (IPD)

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Study Protocol

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Statistical Analysis Plan

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Informed Consent Form

No - There is not a plan to make this available

Clinical Study Report

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Analytic Code

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Data Dictionary

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Title and more details about the data/document

All of Data will be shared.

When the data will become available and for how long

After Publishing the article.

To whom data/document is available

All the researchers who work in university research centers.

Under which criteria data/document could be used

Every required analysis for meta-analyses

From where data/document is obtainable

Contact the responsible researcher

What processes are involved for a request to access data/document

To introduce the research team, their works and what they do to the data

Comments