The Effect of Animal-assisted Play Therapy (AAT) on Improving the Life Quality of Parents having Children with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in children) Treated with Methylphenidate

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Abstract

Background and purpose:
ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in children) is considered to be one of the most widespread neuro-behavioral disorders in children, which is typically characterized by problems such as poor educational performance, communication difficulties and other social inconsistencies. Timely identification and treatment of this disorder can result in significant improvement in their individual and social performances and it can reduce the symptoms of this disorder. Nowadays, play therapy is regarded as one of the recent treatments. One type of play therapy is referred to as animal-assisted play therapy.

Methodology:
This study was based on a single case study in which two children with ADHD were studied. Before the treatment intervention, the life quality questionnaire (SF-36) was conducted on three consecutive days as the baseline. Then, based on the designed operational procedure, the stages of treatment intervention were carried out with a domestic animal (rabbit) within six 45-minute sessions. At the end of the two treatment sessions and during the whole intervention period, the dependent variable, the effect size and improvement rate were measured.

Results:
the results of the study indicated that the experimented animal-assisted play therapy was statistically significant for both children (P< 0.05). However, the rate of improvement in clinical terms was not meaningfully significant.

Conclusion:
with respect to the obtained significant differences in eye diagrams and the calculated physical and mental health indexes and the statistical significance of the effect size, it can be concluded that animal-assisted play therapy can contribute to the relative improvement of the life quality of these children’s parents.