



**Positive Psychology – to alleviate features of Depression as an adjunct to
standard interventions**

Lt Col Indira Das

Professor & HOD, Dept of Mental Health Nursing, CON, Command Hospital, Lucknow,
India.

Article Information:

Type of Article: *Research Article (Original)*

Received On: *24th April 2024*

Accepted On: *5th May 2024*

Published On: *7th May 2024*

Abstract:

Introduction: An estimated 3.8% of the global population experience depression. National Mental Health Survey 2015-16 revealed that one in 20 Indians suffers from depression. 54% of adults show improvement after antidepressant medication. 66% of adults show improvement after CBT. Research has shown Positive Psychology Interventions (PPI) is equally or more effective than CBT in alleviating features of depression, however not a mainstream therapy in this regard.

Aims: To determine the effectiveness of PPI as an adjunct to standard interventions in alleviating features of depression in patients admitted or attending OPDs with Depressive Episode in a tertiary care hospital.

Methods: Quasi Experimental study conducted in Psychiatry OPD and Ward on 50 patients diagnosed with F32 through consecutive sampling. After matching BDI Score, 25 patients were placed in control and 25 in experimental group. The control group received standard intervention of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Psychoeducation and anti-depressants drugs. Whereas the experimental group received three sessions of Positive Psychology Interventions over nine days in adjunct to standard treatment. BDI re-assessed after 1 week of last session.

Results: The mean pre-intervention BDI score of control and experimental groups are 22.6 and 22.52 respectively and the difference is statistically insignificant. Whereas post-intervention



Glorious International Journal of Nursing Research

(An International Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal)

ISSN: 2583-9713

www.gloriousjournal.com

BDI score of control and experimental groups are 20.43 and 17.48 respectively and the difference is statistically significant.

Conclusion: The module of PPI has proved its mettle as an adjunct to standard intervention which may bridge the treatment gap and bring about better outcomes in patients with depression.

Keywords: Positive Psychology, Depression, Intervention

Introduction:

During a depressive episode, a person experiences a depressed mood (feeling sad, irritable, empty) and loss of pleasure or interest in activities which last most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks. Other symptoms include poor concentration, feelings of excessive guilt or low self-worth, hopelessness about the future, thoughts about dying or suicide, disrupted sleep, changes in appetite or weight, feeling very tired or low in energy. Depression can cause difficulties in all aspects of life, including in the community and at home, work and school.¹

An estimated 3.8% of the global population experience depression. National Mental Health Survey 2015-16 revealed that one in 20 Indians suffers from depression.²

54% of adults show improvement after antidepressant medication. 66% of adults show improvement after Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT). However, 25–40% of patients who recover after treatment have another depressive episode within 2 years, 60% after 5 years, and 85% after 15 years.³

Positive Psychology, is ‘the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions’.⁴ Contrary to Clinical Psychology, it focuses on the strength of a person, instead of the psychopathology. Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) therefore, cultivate positive feelings, behaviours and thoughts, improves self-esteem which is capable of alleviating the features of Depression.

Methodology:

A quasi-experimental study was conducted with 50 samples (Control-25, Experimental -25), alternate assignment in control and experimental groups after matching BDI score through consecutive sampling at Psychiatry OPD and Ward in a tertiary care hospital. All samples were



Glorious International Journal of Nursing Research (An International Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal)

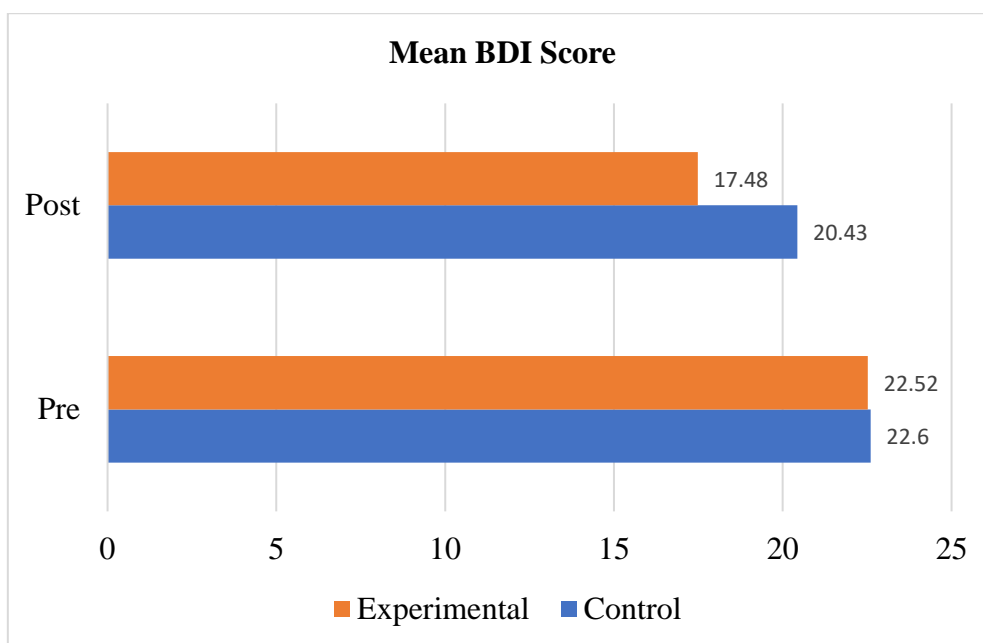
ISSN: 2583-9713

www.gloriousjournal.com

adult patients diagnosed with F32 (Major Depressive Disorder as per International Classification of Disease 10th revision. After that, three sessions of Positive Psychology Interventions were administered with a gap of three days between sessions. BDI Score re-assessed after one week of last session.

Results:

The pre-intervention Mean BDI Scores of experimental and control group were 22.52 and 22.6 respectively. The unpaired t-value between pre-intervention BDI score of control and experimental groups was -0.04942. The p-value is .480395, which is not significant at $p < 0.05$.



Whereas, post-intervention, the Mean BDI scores of controls and experimental groups were 20.43 and 17.43 respectively. The difference between post intervention BDI scores of controls and experimental groups is $t=1.79477$ and p-value is .039781 which is significant at $p < .05$.

Hence, the null hypothesis stating that there is no relationship between the intervention and level of Depression is rejected.

Discussion and Conclusion:

In the present study, the inclusion of PPI to standard treatment is proven effective in minimizing depressive symptoms as evident by lower score in BDI Scale. Similar findings



Glorious International Journal of Nursing Research

(An International Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal)

ISSN: 2583-9713

www.gloriousjournal.com

were brought out in a 2006 study by Beck AT on 41 patients with Major Depressive Disorder that participants who received PPIs showed more symptomatic improvement, compared with participants who received usual treatment.⁵

Another study by Chaves et al on 32 women diagnosed with Depression or Dysthymia showed, in a 10 days group therapy programme, PPIs in experimental group reduced psychopathology and increased positive functioning, in comparison to control group of CBT.⁶

Another group intervention in Iran on 18 patients also compared PPIs with CBT and found similar results. PPI was more effective in increasing happiness than the CBT.⁷

Similarly, Furchtlehner et al investigated the efficacy of a 14-week PPI group programme on 92 patients compared with a CBT group programme. There was a significantly larger reduction in BDI score in the PPI group than the CBT group.⁸

To conclude, it is recommended to use PPI as an adjunct in planning treatment regime for Depression.

References:

1. Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation. Global Health Data Exchange (GHDx). <https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-results/> (Accessed 24 Oct 2023).
2. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Government of India. National Mental Health Survey of India. 2015-16.
3. Cuijpers, P., & Stingaris, A. (2020). Treatment outcomes for depression: challenges and opportunities. *The Lancet*. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(20\)3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(20)3)
4. Gable, S. L., & Haidt, J. (2005). What (and why) is positive psychology? *Rev Gen Psychol*, 9, 103–10.
5. Beck, A. T., & Steer, R. A. (1992). *Beck Anxiety Inventory Manual*. The Psychological Corporation.
6. Chaves, C., Lopez-Gomez, I., Hervas, G., & Vazquez, C. (2017). A comparative study on the efficacy of a positive psychology intervention and a cognitive behavioral therapy for clinical depression. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 41, 417–33.
7. Asgharipoor, N., Asgharnejad Farid, A., Arshadi, H., & Sahebi, A. (2012). A comparative study on the effectiveness of positive psychotherapy and group cognitive-



Glorious International Journal of Nursing Research

(An International Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal)

ISSN: 2583-9713

www.gloriousjournal.com

behavioral therapy for patients suffering from major depressive disorder. *Iran Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences*, 6, 33–41.

8. Furchtlehner, L. M., Schuster, R., & Laireiter, A. R. (2020). A comparative study of the efficacy of group positive psychotherapy and group cognitive behavioral therapy in the treatment of depressive disorders: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 15(6), 832–45.