

COMPARISON OF PERSONALITY DISORDERS IN INDIVIDUALS WITH AND WITHOUT MARITAL INFIDELITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine personality disorders differences in determination of infidelity behaviors. The subjects were 41 individuals with infidelity 37 ones without infidelity who completed MCMI-III questionnaire. MANOVA was used in order that compare the mean scores of two groups in the subscales of MCMI-III. Results suggest that those who had infidelities in their marital life different from ones without infidelities in Clinical personality patterns, Severe personality pathology, Clinical syndromes and Severe clinical syndromes. Further, the individuals with infidelity had high score in Negativistic, Compulsive, Sadistic, Antisocial, Narcissistic, Dependent, Avoidant, Schizotypal and Paranoid. The results indicate that the likelihood of marital infidelity may be realized by personality patterns of these people.

Keywords: Marital Infidelity, Personality Disorders, Marital Relationships, Personality Profile

INTRODUCTION

Marital infidelity (MI) is a sensitive and complex issue. In most countries, a romantic relationship is an important element in determining happiness (Stack and Eshleman, 1998). Although many aspects of modern life have changed, monogamous has been remained as expectancy and extra-marital relation is still a painful and destructive situation for couples (Sweeny and Horwitz, 2001). Marital infidelity is not only serious and painful, but the negative effects of this event for marriage also is stable. Therefore, the discovery of marital infidelity often leads to devastating consequences for individuals and conflicting emotions among the couples. Involvement in romantic relationships outside of the marital relation makes a sense of distrust between couples and may result in divorce (Allen *et al.*, 2005; Steiner *et al.*, 2011).

Many studies have investigated factors related to marital infidelity. Findings show that various factors including suspicious of an unfaithful mate, wife's pregnancy (Wishman *et al.*, 2007), being sexually abused in childhood (Wishman and Snyder, 2007) having divorced parents (Amato and Rodgers, 1997), not being honest and disputing about trust (Atkinz *et al.*, 2005) having too much sexual partners (Wishman and Snyder, 2007), having too much sexually partners before marriage (Trease and Giesen, 2000), high level educations (DeMaris, 2009), being too much interested in sex, and living in large cities (Trease and Giesen, 2000) are positively correlated with marital infidelity. Sexual incompatibility and lack of sexual satisfaction, high levels of sexual interest in one of the couples, having different sexual tendencies or lack of these in one of the couples (Morgan and Docan, 2007), alcohol, drug or substance abuse in one of the couples, demographic features especially gender (Hall *et al.*, 2008), lack of intimacy between couples (Shaw, 1997) are related to the prevalence of marital infidelity.

Also, studies show that personality factors such as low level of conscientiousness (quoted by Momeni, 2012), high level of narcissism (Atkinz *et al.*, 2001), individuals' attachment styles (Underwood, 2005), as well as interpersonal factors including marital conflicts, sexual incompatibility and lack of sexual satisfaction, high levels of sexual interest in one of the couples, having different sexual tendencies or lack of sexual tendencies in one of the couples are important in this matter. In addition, those who marry at younger ages and those who have weaker religious beliefs are more in danger of making infidelity (Allen *et al.*, 2008). However, some argue that observed relationships between personal characteristics and marital infidelity in various cultures may be different (Schmith, 2004) and thus, generalization of these findings to be considered with cautions.

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According to mentioned studies, infidelity is a complicated phenomenon and various factors can be involved in it. Therefore, no linear conclusion can be made about the various factors affecting it and it should be remembered that a phenomenon like infidelity is very complicated and is related to various factors. This phenomenon becomes more complicated when studies reveal that infidelity is not only restricted to incompatible and dissatisfied couples. Gelas and Right (1991) showed that 56% of men and 34% of women made infidelity had successful marriages and reported high levels of marital satisfaction. However, others have discovered a positive and significant relation between marital dissatisfaction and marital infidelity (Mark *et al.*, 2011).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Despite all the above mentioned studies, few researches have been done on the relationship between personality disorders and extra-marital relations and there is lack of research in the literature of marital infidelity. Therefore, this study wants to compare personality disorders in individuals with and without infidelity.

The study sample consisted of couples suffering from marital infidelity referring to psychological clinics and ones without marital infidelity in Tehran city. The sample included 78 couples selected via purposive sampling who divided to the experiment (41 couples with MI) and control (37 couples without MI). Based on the nature and the kind of compared symptoms, those couples were selected that had been involved in marital infidelity, aged between 20 to 50 years of old, had reading and writing literacy, with legal marriage, and had a shared life (living in the same house). In contrast, couples who had disorders of Axis I (especially severe psychotic disorders), aged below 20 and above 50, were alcohol or substance abusers, or being divorced (not living in the same house) were excluded from the study.

Research Tools

Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-III (MCMI-III, 1997): questionnaire was used to assess personality profile in each group. MCMI-III is a self-performed yes/no questionnaire with 175 questions. The MCMI-III consists of 24 clinical scales and 3 modifier scales. The modifier scales are used to identify Disclosure (tendency to hide or exaggerate pathology), Desirability (tendency to give socially desirable responses), and Debasement (tendency to give responses suggestive of pathology). The clinical scales consist of 11 clinical personality pattern scales (Schizoid, Avoidant, Depressive, Dependent, Histrionic, Narcissistic, Antisocial, Sadistic, Compulsive, Negativistic, Masochistic); 3 severe personality pathology scales (Schizotypal, Borderline, Paranoid); 7 Clinical Syndrome Scales (Anxiety, Somatoform, Bipolar, Dysthymia, Alcohol Dependence, Drug Dependence, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder); and three Severe Clinical Syndrome scales (Thought Disorder, Major Depression, and Delusional Disorder). This test was already validated for Iranian population (quoted by Khorram *et al.*, 2010).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

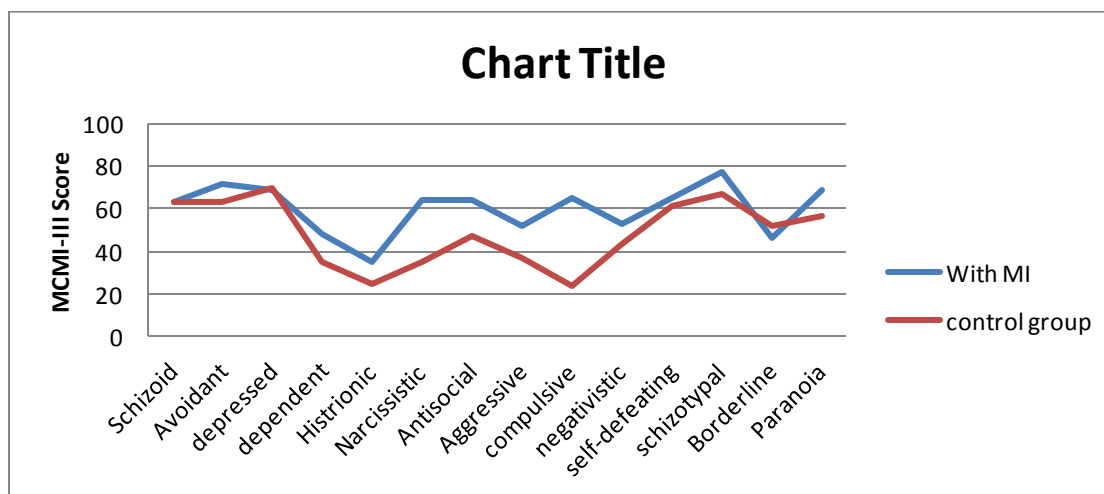
To present a clearer picture of demographic features of the study groups. Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of age, studies, marriage duration, and gender of the two groups. The mean differences analysis showed that the mean of age, studies and marriage duration of the groups are not statistically significant. Also, k Square test indicated that gender frequency was similar in the both groups.

Table 1-4: Demographic features of the studied group

Variable	Group	Number	M	SD	df	t	Sig.
Age	With MI	41	38.26	6.06	76	0.29	0.76
	Without MI	37	38.68	7.26			
Studies	With MI	41	14.35	1.4	76	0.41	0.68
	Without MI	37	14.15	2.8			
Marriage	With MI	41	11.02	6.47	76	0.55	0.58
Duration	Without MI	37	11.82	6.84			
Gender	With MI	41	Male (25)	Female (16)			0.73
	Without MI	37	Male (32)	Female (14)			

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Diagram 1 is the descriptive picture of mean scores of the group with and the group without marital infidelity in personality disorders that its significance will be shown in continuation. In general, the group with marital infidelity had a larger ration of personality disorders. Specifically, this difference is more obvious in schizoid, depressed and borderline personality disorders. In other words, the prevalence rate of avoidant, dependent, histrionic, narcissistic, antisocial, aggressive, negativistic, self-defeating, schizotypal and paranoia personality disorders is more in breaking-commitment couples in comparison who are faithful to their marriage.



Hotelling effect test was performed to investigate the levels of independent variable based on dependent variable.

Table 6-4: Mean and standard deviation in the studied group in dependent variables

Variable	Group	M	SD	Variable	Group	M	SD	N
Schizoid	With MI	63.12	15.8	borderline	With MI	46.4	13.8	41
	Without MI	63.59	15.7		Without MI	51.8	10.8	37
Avoidant	With MI	71.32	18.33	paranoia	With MI	69.58	12.5	41
	Without MI	63.33	15.04		Without MI	56.6	10.19	37
Depressed	With MI	68.47	19.7	anxious	With MI	71.78	14.6	41
	Without MI	69.47	17.3		Without MI	75.79	15.5	37
Dependent	With MI	48.4	28.9	Psychosomatic	With MI	61.2	19.5	41
	Without MI	35.05	21.5		Without MI	61.68	15.5	37
Histrionic	With MI	35.32	29.3	Bipolar: Mania	With MI	63.6	21.3	41
	Without MI	24.9	26.6		Without MI	37.3	12.2	37
Narcissistic	With MI	64.01	27.7	Dysthymia	With MI	59.5	29.6	41
	Without MI	35.24	19.3		Without MI	61.8	24.1	37
Antisocial	With MI	64.4	2.2	Alcohol	With MI	69.7	10.13	41
	Without MI	47.2	10.7		Without MI	63.68	7.78	37
Aggressive	With MI	51.4	16.2	Substance	With MI	78.9	12.8	41
	Without MI	36.7	16.2		Without MI	65.5	12.3	37
Compulsive	With MI	64.8	35	PTSD	With MI	68.3	16.7	41
	Without MI	23.8	24.6		Without MI	71.1	15.6	37
Negativistic	With MI	52.9	17.7	Thought	With MI	70.6	13.5	41
	Without MI	43.36	14.3		Without MI	73.05	12.08	37
Self-defeating	With MI	65.2	17.7	Major	With MI	78.09	12.8	41
	Without MI	61.4	11.7		Without MI	69.2	13.9	37
Schizotypal	With MI	77.5	14.9	Delusion	With MI	86.5	10.6	41
	Without MI	66.9	14.7		Without MI	72.8	12.8	37

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The result of this test showed that the difference between independent variable levels in linear composition of dependent variables was significant. In other words, there was a significant difference between with and without marital infidelity groups in personality disorders. To find this difference is exactly in which dependent variable, a follow up test was done via variance analysis. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of multivariate variance analysis on scores of disorder components in clinical symptoms

Variable	Group	M	SD	df	F	Sig.
Schizoid	With MI	63.12	15.8	1	0.017	0.89
	Without MI	63.59	15.7			
Avoidant	With MI	71.32	18.33	1	4.37	0.04
	Without MI	63.33	15.04			
Depressed	With MI	68.47	19.7	1	0.00	0.82
	Without MI	69.47	17.3			
Dependent	With MI	48.4	28.9	1	5.23	0.025
	Without MI	35.05	21.5			
Histrionic	With MI	35.32	29.3	1	2.65	0.107
	Without MI	24.9	26.6			
Narcissistic	With MI	64.01	27.7	11	27.84	0.000
	Without MI	35.24	19.3			
Antisocial	With MI	64.4	2.2	1	21.36	0.001
	Without MI	47.2	10.7			
Aggressive	With MI	51.4	16.2	1	21.19	0.001
	Without MI	36.7	16.2			
Compulsive	With MI	64.8	35	1	35.03	0.000
	Without MI	23.8	24.6			
Negativistic	With MI	52.9	17.7	1	6.77	0.011
	Without MI	43.36	14.3			
Self-defeating	With MI	65.2	17.7	1	1.213	0.274
	Without MI	61.4	11.7			
Schizotypal	With MI	77.5	14.9	1	9.905	0.002
	Without MI	66.9	14.7			
Borderline	With MI	46.4	13.8	1	3.72	0.057
	Without MI	51.8	10.8			
Paranoia	With MI	69.08	12.5	1	22.77	0.000
	Without MI	56.06	10.19			

Results

As it is seen in Table 2, there is a significant difference between with and without marital infidelity groups in these variables: negativistic ($F=6.77$, $p<0.01$), aggressive ($F=11.19$, $P<0.001$), antisocial ($F=21.36$, $P<0.000$), narcissism ($F=27.84$, $P<0.000$), dependent ($F=5.23$, $P<0.025$), schizotypal ($F=9.95$, $P<0.002$) and Paranoia ($F=22.77$, $P<0.000$). However, no significant difference was found between the two groups in schizoid, self-defeating, histrionic, borderline and depressed personality disorders.

Discussion

The results analysis indicated that the rate of personality disorders prevalence was more in the group with marital infidelity comparing the control group. This finding is consistent with those of Greeley (1994), Beach *et al.*, (2005), Hall *et al.*, (2008), Smith (2004), Buss and Shackelford (2008) and Aromaeki *et al.*, (2002) who state that there is a relation between marital infidelity and personality characteristics and low level of mental health. Also, other studies have reported high levels of narcissism (Aviram and Amichai-

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Hamburger, 2005; Atkinz *et al.*, 2001), psychosis, drug and substance abuse (Aviram and Amichai-Hamburger, 2005), defect in verbal and problem solving skills (Young *et al.*, 2000) in traitors in comparison to general individuals. The results of variance analysis for investigation of groups mean differences showed that the group with marital infidelity in variables such as negativistic, compulsion, aggressiveness and antisocial behavior to possess significant differences from the group without marital infidelity. The findings have harmony with studies of Lameiras *et al.*, (2003), Wenzlaff and Wegner (2000) and Ferguson (2011). However, no significant difference was found in schizoid, self-defeating, histrionic, and depressed variables. In explanation of these outcomes, it can be said that negativistic is one of the traits of neurotic persons. Personality trait of neuroticism has root in negative emotionalism including anxiety, depression and anger. Neuroticism has been shown to have relation with several sexual problematic behaviors such as sexual dissatisfaction and marital problems (Gottman, 1994). Some studies have discovered that those with higher scores in neuroticism have more easy-going sexual attitudes (Lameiras *et al.*, 2003) and unprotected sexual activities (McCown, 1992).

It is not exactly clear how neuroticism leads to high-dangerous sexual behaviors. Some researchers believe that neurotic individuals use desultory sexual behaviors as a mean to cope with their emotional dissatisfaction (Cooper *et al.*, 2000). It is also possible that neurotics are less able to resist against their temptations and impulsivities in comparison to those with emotional stability (Trobst *et al.*, 2002). For instance, a great volume of studies have shown relationships among high mood instability, high psychosis, low responsibility, lack of emotional stability and marital infidelity (Buss, 1991, Buss and Shakelford, 2008; Shackelford *et al.*, 2008).

Not so many studies have investigated the relations between aggressiveness and antisocial behaviors, narcissism, and dependent and avoidant personality disorders with marital infidelity. These disorders are among Cluster B of personality disorders. Impulsive behaviors and aggression are common traits of these disorders. For example, individuals with antisocial personality are emotion seeking, aggressive and swinger and to enjoy violates others' rights. Studies have revealed that personality traits such as manipulation, deception, low acceptance and high psychopathy (Holley *et al.*, 2000) and sensation seeking (Lalasz and Weigel, 2011) have relations with marital infidelity.

Attachment theory has presented another explanation for marital infidelity. This theory has implied to relative high rate of sexual or physical abuse in childhood in individuals committing marital infidelity. According to attachment theory, early damaging experiences may create insecure attachment and make it difficult for these persons to involve in intimate relations. Some studies supported the hypothesis and to show that insecure and avoidance attachment styles to be more in persons suffering from cluster B personality disorders in comparison to the normal ones (Minzenberg *et al.*, 2006).

According to attachment theory, intimacy makes a mental representation of availability of close individuals, to lead to strong behavioral and cognitive patterns of response to others. In fact, people with secure attachment style to believe that close individuals in their lives are available and behave based on this hypothesis, while those with insecure attachment styles including anxious or avoidance ones tend to believe that important people of their lives are not accessible. Those who have high levels of anxious attachment, are unconfident about availability of close care givers and cope with this anxiety by assurance seeking and (physical and emotional) sticking to their loved ones (Brennan and Shower, 1995). In contrast, those who have high levels of avoidant attachment are susceptible about availability of their care givers and use avoidant behaviors (Gentzler and Kerns, 2004).

Both insecure attachment styles may be related to marital infidelity. Individuals, whose attachment style is anxious, tend to feel that their needs for intimacy will not be met in their present relations and use meta-marital infidelity to meet these needs (Birnbaum *et al.*, 2006; Wang *et al.*, 2012). Also, those with high avoidant attachment tend chronically to be less committed to their relations (DeWall *et al.*, 2011) and to have more easy-going sexual attitudes (Bernnan and Shower, 1995). In addition, others traits of this cluster are being histrionic and extrovert, neuroticism and narcissism. Extraverts, in comparison to introverts, tend to have more easy-going attitudes toward plurality of sexual partners and experiencing different situations in sexual relations. They also engage in sexual relations in younger ages, and their

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frequencies and number of sexual partners are more compared to introverts (Eysenk and Eysenk, 1975; quoted by Smith, 2004). Various studies have investigated the relationship between extroversion and risky sexual behaviors (Costa *et al.*, 1992; McCown, 1992) as well as high neuroticism and low responsibility with personality disorders of Cluster B (Madsen *et al.*, 2006).

Maybe the reason of extroverts more tendencies toward risky sexual behavior is that they have higher levels of libido in comparison to introverts or it may be caused by their habituations to more stimulate the brain cortex via exiting sexual behaviors to reach higher levels of excitation to feel more comfortable (Eysenk, 1976).

Furthermore, there was a significant difference between clinical patterns of the groups' personalities in schizotypal and paranoia consistent with the studies of Eysenk (1976) and Wishman *et al.*, (2007). However, borderline personality disorder was significantly different between the two groups. According to these findings, it can be concluded that based Five-Factor Theory, individuals with low agreeableness and conscientiousness are more in danger of breaking their commitment in the first four years of marital life (Hoyle *et al.*, 2000).

Various studies have uncovered the relationships between schizotypal and paranoia with neuroticism, and the negative relation with openness and responsibility (Rawling *et al.*, 2001). Neurotic people are apt to apply risky behavior styles for coping with annoying mood states, while extroverts use these behaviors as a tool for increasing positive emotional experiences. Interact among extraversion, neuroticism and impulsivity can predicts motivations to use risky behaviors (Cooper *et al.*, 2000). Low level of agreeableness is negatively related to risky behaviors including having plural sexual partners and using substances and alcohol while low level of conscientiousness to have a strong relation with unprotected sexual behaviors. Infidelity in marital relation is consistently related to low agreeableness and conscientiousness. These findings have been approved even by controlling cultural differences (Schmith, 2004).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that mental health of individuals with marital infidelity to be lower than those without it. Besides, some disorder and personality traits such as negativistic, compulsion, antisocial, narcissism, dependent, schizotypal, paranoia, and avoidant may be related to marital infidelity. Therefore, it is suggested that clinicians and experts of couple therapies pay special attention to these personality disorders.

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