

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter is divided into four parts consisting of findings and conclusions, implications of findings, limitation, and recommendation for further research.

Findings and Conclusions

This randomized controlled trial study design with repeated measure was conducted to examine the effect of group CBT program on depressive symptoms among older Thai women. The sample group included 60 older women with mild depressive symptoms, and not meeting the criteria of Major Depressive Disorder, age between 61-85 years at the day of offending, who met the inclusion criteria of the study. The experimental group received group CBT program developed by the researcher based on Beck's Cognitive Theory (2011), whereas the control group received the usual care. The mean depression scores were evaluated at the baseline, after completing group CBT program immediately, one month follow-up and three months follow-up by using the PHQ-9 Thai version (Lortakul, Sumrithe, and Saipanish, 2008) that was tested for its reliability from which the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89 was obtained.

Results of the study are summarized as below.

1. There was a significant difference of mean depression among older women in the experimental group who attended CBT program between baseline, immediately after completing group CBT program, one month, and three months follow up. All of three points of time measurement ($\bar{x}_{\text{time1}} = 6.43$, $SD = 1.17$, $\bar{x}_{\text{time2}} = 2.87$, $SD = 1.20$, $\bar{x}_{\text{time3}} = 2.73$, $SD = 2.17$, $\bar{x}_{\text{time4}} = 2.93$, $SD = 2.50$) demonstrated mean depression scores lower than baseline.

2. There was a significant difference of mean depression scores among all of the three points of time measurement; immediately after completing the program, at one month, and three month follow-up between older women in the experimental group who received group CBT program, and those who received the usual care, where the experimental group demonstrated mean depression scores lower than that of the control group, overtime.

Implication of Findings

The findings of this study's relevant implications for nursing practice and nursing research are as below.

Implication for Nursing Practice

Group CBT program developed by the researcher can verify and assure the effectiveness of the program for reducing depressive symptoms among Thai older women living in the community. The researcher followed Beck's Cognitive theory and Cognitive Behavior Therapy (Beck, 2011), as the major component of the program, and applied some strategies of CBT with older people that were provided by Laidlaw et al. (2003) especially with older women. The results of this study showed the effectiveness of group CBT program on mean scores of depressive symptoms statistically significant immediately after completing the program, and it has also been significantly different at each of the two times of follow-up period. This study provided the theoretical background of group CBT and can enable psychiatric nurses to consider the application of group CBT principles in their practice.

Group CBT program proves how psychiatric nurses and older Thai women who have mildly depressive symptoms, can successful work together to improve depressive symptoms. Additionally, the results provided basic information for the Department of Mental Health of Thailand, to be able to apply this program as a guideline for nursing intervention for depressive symptoms for older Thai women living in the community. However, psychiatric nurses require to be well trained in CBT, have enough knowledge, and experience in CBT of depressive persons in order to get comprehensive understanding of the principles of the CBT that can impact to overcome patients'

problems associated with depression, before using this group CBT program. The evidence of this study suggests that psychiatric nurses can develop programs for other groups of patients by applying CBT strategies, and well designed, especially with the population of interest that was used in this study.

Implication for Nursing Research

The results of this study indicate that group CBT program was effective in reducing depression among older women. Additionally, the results support that this program was more effective than usual care in reducing depression. Thus, this study suggests that group CBT program has potential to improve depressive symptoms in older Thai women, ensure accessibility to receive mental health care service for reducing depression, reduce number of depressed persons under treatment, and might be cost effective for a vulnerable population, such as older persons in the community. Psychiatric nurses have important roles in investigating further group CBT program in a different group of older persons, to that of the first study depression in chronic illness persons or in other groups of aged with depression, such as how to use group CBT program for palliative care for cancer patients. The second study, psychiatric nurses integrate this program into their standard care. The last study, how to help older women live with good mental health, so as to prevent depression in the elderly.

Limitation of the Study

The outcome of the study relied on self-report measurement with the PHQ-9, which may be susceptible to social desirability and recall biases. Studies with longer-term follow-up are needed to investigate long time effects of CBT's effects.

Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendation for further study include as following:

1. The effectiveness of group CBT program needs further testing for a larger sample in both older men, and women, in all regions of Thailand.
2. A follow-up study ought to be done to identify long term outcomes (such as 12 or 18 months follow-up).

3. The effectiveness of group CBT program on other outcomes, such as quality of life, and cost effectiveness, compared with the usual care must be investigated.



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