

The Effectiveness of ACT on Negative Affect, Emotional Processing, and Psychological Hardiness in Women Experiencing Domestic Violence


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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

This opening statement is strong, but it could benefit from a more specific reference to the broader societal and cultural factors that influence domestic violence in Iran. Including data on the prevalence and unique socio-cultural aspects of domestic violence in Iran would provide context for the research focus. A reference to specific cultural, legal, or societal barriers in Iran may also strengthen the argument for the need for targeted psychological interventions.

Psychological hardiness is a critical construct in this study, and this sentence could benefit from a more detailed explanation of the mechanisms through which domestic violence erodes hardiness. How might trauma, repeated victimization, and lack of control in abusive relationships contribute to a decrease in hardiness?

The comparison between the psoriasis study and this research on domestic violence is interesting but could be more fully developed. How do the mechanisms underlying distress tolerance in women with psoriasis relate to those in women experiencing domestic violence? It would be valuable to explore potential similarities or differences in the emotional and psychological processes that ACT addresses.

The inclusion criteria for age and the time frame of exposure to domestic violence are clear, but the authors might consider whether there are additional factors that could influence the efficacy of ACT, such as the severity of the violence, the

participants' relationship status, or socioeconomic factors. Including these variables as potential moderators could help provide a more nuanced understanding of the intervention's effects.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The citation here (Kazemi, 2017) is appropriate but may be outdated. Consider updating the reference to more recent studies or government reports that provide current data on domestic violence in Iran. This would help ground the article in the most recent research on this issue.

The transition from general claims about domestic violence to the specific outcomes in women is clear. However, the article could elaborate further on the mechanisms linking these psychological outcomes to exposure to domestic violence. For example, discussing the neurobiological or emotional regulation pathways might provide a deeper understanding of why these specific psychological outcomes are observed in this population.

The general description of ACT's effectiveness is appropriate, but it would be beneficial to briefly explain how ACT's mechanisms (e.g., psychological flexibility, acceptance, etc.) are particularly relevant to populations suffering from chronic stress, such as those experiencing domestic violence. This would bridge the gap between the established effectiveness of ACT in other populations and its potential for the target group in this study.

The definition of negative affect is clear, but the article could benefit from distinguishing between state and trait negative affect in the context of domestic violence. Chronic exposure to stress may lead to trait-level negative affect, which may have different implications for therapeutic interventions like ACT. This distinction would add precision to the discussion.

It would be helpful to explore more deeply how emotional processing is disrupted in the context of domestic violence, particularly how women in abusive relationships may develop maladaptive emotion regulation strategies (e.g., suppression, avoidance) that exacerbate psychological distress. A theoretical explanation or model could support this discussion.

Randomization is a strength of the study. However, it would be useful to include more information about whether any steps were taken to ensure comparability between the groups at baseline (e.g., matching on key variables such as severity of domestic violence or pre-existing psychological conditions). This would ensure that the observed effects are more likely due to the intervention rather than group differences.

The statistical assumptions are well-documented. However, it would be helpful to report on any post-hoc analyses or checks for potential confounders that could have impacted the results (e.g., history of abuse, co-occurring psychological conditions). This would strengthen the methodological rigor of the study.

The statistical analysis is robust, but the effect sizes presented are substantial ($\eta^2 = 0.52$ for Negative Affect, $\eta^2 = 0.55$ for Emotional Processing, $\eta^2 = 0.58$ for Psychological Hardiness). It would be informative to interpret these effect sizes in the context of existing research. For example, how do these effect sizes compare to those found in other interventions targeting psychological distress in women exposed to domestic violence or trauma?

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.