

## Relationship between Spiritual Health with Marital Satisfaction

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### ABSTRACT

**BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE:** Spiritual health is the basis of family and community health. In marital relationships, several factors led to the satisfaction of wives from each other. In the meantime, the role of spirituality is crucial from surrounded on all aspects of human life. This study was performed with aim of analyzing the relationship between spiritual health with marital satisfaction and Comparison of them between men and women.

**METHODS:** The sectional study was conducted on 341 married students of Medical Sciences in Azad University, Sari branch. Criterion variable (spiritual health) and predictor variable (marital satisfaction) were measured by standard questionnaires including Paloutzian & Ellison (1982) and Enrich(2000) with 5-item Likert scale with a minimum score of 1 (very low) to maximum score of 5 (very high) and also two groups of men and women were compared.

**FINDINGS:** Spiritual health had direct and meaningful relationship with marital satisfaction (CI-95% R= 0.009). There was no difference of marital satisfaction in men with average of  $3.36 \pm 0.35$  and women with average of  $3.44 \pm 0.43$  ( $p=0.342$ ) but, the spiritual health in men with average of  $2.7 \pm 0.25$  was more than women with average of  $2.6 \pm 0.14$  ( $p=0.000$ ).

**CONCLUSION:** According the results, there was no difference of marital satisfaction in man and woman but, the spiritual health in men was more than women. Marital satisfaction had increased by increasing spiritual health in men and women students.

**KEY WORDS:** *Spiritual Health, Marital Satisfaction, Students.*

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## Introduction

One of the issues affecting the quality of life of the couple's is health status. Human beings during the twentieth century, over the entire history of mankind in terms of lifestyles, social and economic issues has changed. In fact, trying to industrialization and urbanization and mechanization of life that is necessary to accept new ways of life causes to appear other aspects in health issues in addition to other physical and mental dimensions (1).

Spiritual health is one of variables that researchers have paid attention to it and it is as a framework that human can understand meaning, purpose and transcendent values of her/his life. Spirituality is a broad concept that is connected with wisdom, compassion, enjoyable life experience and moral sensitivities (2). Thus the importance of human spirituality and spiritual growth have attracted psychologists and sociologists increasingly in the past few decades (3). Spirituality is as the umbrella that cover concepts as diverse as health, spiritual, faith, belief and spiritual coping (4).

In fact, the spiritual health is the latest health aspect which is along with other aspects of health such as physical, mental and social health, and promote public health and coordinate other aspects of the health. This will result in increased compliance and increased psychological functions (5,6). Spiritual health is identified with characteristics such as stability in life, peace, feeling close relationship with self, God, society and the environment, proportion and harmony, purpose and meaning of life (7).

In addition, the development of health sciences on the one hand and dynamic and complex nature of modern societies on the other hand has caused human spiritual needs stand up against desires and material needs and be more important. In faith to God, there is an extraordinary power that gives a religious spiritual power to human and endure the hardships of life and helps him as a result of higher life satisfaction (8). In addition, in the community, spouse selection of male and female is a prelude to form a family. The marriage is the first legal and emotional commitment that we accept in adulthood.

In addition to choose a spouse, marital commitment is considered as a milestone in the growth and personal development. But young people often select their spouse based on emotions and sexuality. Unrealistic ideas about marriage caused a great outcry of married life, and this dissatisfaction leads to high rates of divorce (9). Studies show that marital satisfaction has

significant effects on many aspects of individual and social life of humans. Satisfactory marital relationships is the foundation of good performance of family (10). Winch believes that marital satisfaction is coincidence between existing marital statuses in a person with expected marital status (11).

Rofe and colleagues in general consider marital satisfaction as positive emotions, love, sexual satisfaction, agreement on economic, housekeeping and child-rearing (12). This definition of a person's sexual satisfaction achieved once the status of marital relationships in accordance with what he had expected, (13). Many factors can affect marital satisfaction and each one according to his specific attitude or results, expresses some factors for marital satisfaction (14). Literature review showed, attention to the spiritual health is an essential factor that affects marital satisfaction in particular and the health and survival of family in general.

Domestic and foreign research review also suggested the relationship between spiritual health and marital satisfaction. Mousavi Moghadam et al in their study concluded that there is significant relationship between spiritual health and marital satisfaction among married nurses, and gender is the significant predictor for spiritual health and marital satisfaction, but age, duration of marriage, period of employment were not significant predictors (15). Rostami et al concluded that elements of spiritual intelligence are effective on marital satisfaction that this is different between men and women (16).

Liceaga and colleagues concluded in their study that generosity by increasing empathy, decreased marital boredom and consequently, an increase in marital satisfaction (17). King et al in their study suggest that people with spiritual health than those who has not spiritual health are worse in physical health (18). In research conducted by some researchers, intrinsic religious orientation had not significant positive relationship with spiritual health and external religious orientation, was not significantly associated with mental health (19).

The findings of Edalati and colleagues in a study suggest that the relationship between the rates of female aggression was the dominance and marital satisfaction (20). Although extensive research has been performed to investigate the effects of spiritual problems in rate of satisfaction and marital conflicts, but there are the problems of marital dissatisfaction in society, therefore further study is necessary in this field. Several factors threaten marital relations between

spouses over time and causing erosion of love and intimacy between spouses and leading to their dissatisfaction in marital life. One of these factors is the difference between the spiritual life of the couples which fluctuates highly the health of relationship, attention to the spiritual health of couples can increase the satisfaction of their marital and ultimately improve family functioning and since marriage core first create a single foundation of the family and that, in turn, is the cornerstone of human society.

Therefore, the study of marital satisfaction and its relationship with variables such as spiritual health is necessary which in turn play a major role in marital relations, the aim of this article is to examine the relationship between spiritual health and marital satisfaction and its comparison in men and women.

## Methods

This study was done on 341 married students of Islamic Azad University, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Sari after receiving permission from the Ethics Committee of the Islamic Azad University of Sari. Married people with a history of more than 5 years, using random stratified sampling by gender were enrolled. To assess the criterion variables of spiritual health, spiritual health questionnaire Paloutzian was used. The questionnaire had 20 questions which 10 questions of religious health, 10 questions of spiritual health of the individual and ultimately spiritual health of individuals was divided into three categories: low (40-20), medium (99-41) and high (120-100) and the validity of spiritual health questionnaire after translation to Persian through content validity and reliability was determined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.82 (21) and to measure variable of job satisfaction, Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire was used, the scale has been designed by Olson with 12 subscales.

It will be considered five options (Likert-type) (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) to each of the five points are given. The score of 47 questions together, and a raw score obtained such a high score indicating higher satisfaction. The validity of the questionnaire of content and construct validity and alpha coefficients Olson and colleagues reported in the questionnaire (22). In Iran test-retest reliability of the questionnaire was 0.86 at average of 4-week (13). Data from the questionnaires were analyzed using the Kolmogorov-

Smirnov test, Shapiro, Pearson correlation and independent t-samples and  $p < 0.05$  was considered significant.

## Results

In this study, 341 medical students were enrolled, 192 (56.3%) women and 149 (43.7%) were male. The results showed a significant correlation between spiritual health and marital satisfaction ( $p = 0.000$ ,  $R = 0.79$ ,  $CI - 95\%$ ) so that with increase in the spiritual health, the marital satisfaction increases and vice versa. The mean of spiritual health of men ( $2.7 \pm 0.25$ ) was higher than female students ( $2.6 \pm 0.14$ ), on the other hand, men had more spiritual health in their life ( $p = 0.000$ ). But there was no statistically significant difference between the average of marital satisfaction variable in both men ( $3.36 \pm 0.35$ ) and women ( $3.44 \pm 0.43$ ).

## Discussion

The results showed that the two variables, spiritual health and marital satisfaction had a significant and direct correlation, so whatever spiritual health increases marital satisfaction in couples increases which is consistent with research findings of Mousavi Moghadam and colleagues that showed there is a significant relationship in between health spiritual and marital satisfaction in married nurses (15).

The mentioned investigation showed that among demographic variables, gender is a significant predictor of spiritual health and marital satisfaction. Rostami et al also showed that elements of spiritual intelligence influences marital satisfaction (16), since people with high spiritual intelligence components have the spiritual health as well, therefore somehow are along with the results of present study. The difference in the average spiritual health of two groups of students with different sex, significantly different from each other and the spiritual health of male students than female students which was similar to research results of Mousavi Moghadam and colleagues and Rostami et al that showed gender is significant predictor of spiritual health, is different between men and women (16, 15).

The results also showed that the average marital satisfaction between two groups of students with different sex, and marital satisfaction had significant differences with each other which is different in male

and female students. In this study, significant relationship between spiritual health and marital satisfaction in married students were observed. Based on the results, so what spiritual health and mental structural take into account that although other psychological constructs such as marital satisfaction, but in terms of variables, including gender sensitivity and are very different.

The spiritual health provides harmonious relationship between internal forces and with features like stability in life, peace, proportion, feel a close connection with God, and the environment. In general, it can be stated that the spiritual health and perceptions of God and the concept of God is effective on the health and sustainability of life, especially marital life. Another point is that, type of vision to God and the personal image of God is affected by the rearing and education. Hence, the results of such research can be used as a treatment in marital satisfaction is of interest to educators and higher education. While the emphasis

on spiritual health of society and the academic community in all stages of life and comfort, and problems should be considered further. In this regard, it is suggested to hold workshops and training classes such as life skills classes for more attention before marriage. As well as holding seminars and scientific conference on strengthening spiritual values in families are effective. However, for better spiritual health, the students should also try by scientific movement and in their ability study and investigate and see the books that are written in this field, to find out answers or by asking questions from religious scholars, tell their uncertainties and doubts in mind to clarify ambiguities and ultimately increase their faith.

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