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Abstract

To date there has been little controlled research on use of puppet therapy to facilitate psychotherapy in general and alcoholism treatment in particular. This study established a foundation for quantitative puppet therapy research. The contribution of three puppet therapy sessions compared to three sessions of regular therapy in a 12-Step inpatient chemical dependency facility on evaluation of treatment, anxiety levels, spiritual coping, and alexithymia were investigated. Respondents ($N = 71$) were patients at an inpatient chemical dependency facility. Participants completed the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ-8), the State and Trait Anxiety Scale, the Religious Problem-solving Scale, and some demographic questions. Days in treatment was used as a covariate and units (women, men, and older adults) were used as a stratifying variable. Results indicate that puppet therapy was evaluated significantly higher by all groups compared to regular therapy. For women and men ages 55 and below, state and trait anxiety was lower in puppet therapy groups compared to regular therapy groups and higher for state and trait anxiety for older adults, women and men ages 56 and above. Spiritual coping scores were nonsignificant except for the men's unit. The self-directing style of spiritual coping was used, rather than the collaborative or deferring styles, in both therapy groups on the men's unit significantly more than the older adults unit. ANCOVA was used to evaluate therapy, unit and the interaction of therapy with unit for each of the seven dependent variables. Further research duplicating this study as well as testing of this model with clientele who have obtained longer sobriety is recommended.