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Using Hypnosis in a case of Vaginismus: A Case Report

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Abstract

Vaginismus has been considered by therapists not only as medical disorder, but as a psychological symptom. Accordingly, the present case study intends to treat vaginismus by psychological approach through the hypnotherapy in a 35-year-old female Vaginismus patient. The result has been demonstrated that applying hypnosis as an intervention in vaginismus could be mentioned by therapists as profitable treatment technique.

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1. Introduction

Vaginismus as one of the sexual dysfunctions is virtually common in women. According to the academic definition, vaginismus has been characterized as pain conditioned caused by involuntary spasm of the muscles around the lower one third of the vagina, resulting from the association of sexual activity with pain and fear (Butcher, 1999; Graziottin, 2006; Basson, Leiblum, Brotto, 2004).

Based on existing data 0.5-1% of fertile women are suffering from this symptom (Bergeron et al, 1997). It has been accepted that vaginismus is a complex problem and frequently has a multi-factorial aetiology (Graziottin, 2006). Investigators have been classified two essential physical and psychological causes in vaginismus (Shein, et al, 1988).

There are numerous physical situations that could cause to pain during sexual intercourse, common physical causes for coital discomfort include infections of the vagina, lower urinary tract, cervix, or fallopian tubes, endometriosis, surgical scar tissue, and ovarian cysts and tumors (Bachmann, et al, 1984; Graziottin, 2006; Basson, Leiblum, Brotto; 2004) have been indicated by physicians.

Also psychological factors should play a crucial role to arouse this dysfunction. The problems such as avoidance, fear of penetration, anxiety, (Bergeron et al, 1997; Basson, 2005; Reissing, Binik, Khalifét, 1999; Van der veld, Laan, Everaerd, 2001) relationship problems, chronic frustration, disappointment and depression, previous child sexual abuse (Spiegel, 1989) could be experienced by patients as painful spasmodic reflex. In addition, poor sexual self-esteem, lack of interest, and general inability to find pleasurable sex, increasingly have been shown as psychological causes in such patients (Dunne, Najman, 2005).

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Since vaginismus leads to infertility and sexual dysfunctions in either partner, (McGuire, Hawton, 2001) treatment has been more initial (Basson, 1996). Directly, Some researches showed that painful, unsuccessful attempts at intercourse increase degree of marital distress in couples and this situation has negative effect on physical and emotional satisfaction on each spouse (Dunne, Najman, 2005; Graziottin, 2003 Carol, 2001; McGuire, Hawton, 2001; Zitman, et al, 1992; Whorwell, Prior, Faragher, 1984).

Applying hypnosis as treatment has been utilizing in large number of psychological and physical diseases (Rowley, 1986). Hypnotherapy is used in psychological problems like psychosomatic pain, (Ramachandra, Chaturvudi, 2006) anorexia nervosa, (Baker, Nash, 1987) anxiety, depression, phobia, disturbed sleep and insomnia (Shenefelt, 2002). It is also has generous capability of improvement in physical difficulties such as cholecystectomy, (Ozturk, 2006) idiopathic cervical dystonia (Benedittis, 1998). Surprisingly, this method has been beneficial for patients suffering from pain, (Carol, 2001) such as irritable bowel syndrome (Whorwell, Prior, Faragher, 1984; Whorwell, Prior, Colgan, 1987; Houghton, Heyman, Whorwell, 1996; Wendy et al, 2002), burn injury, (Kabalak et al, 2006) bone fracture, (Ginandes, Rosenthal, 1999), body aches, (Ozturk, 2006), pain of childbirth, (James, 2009) and Tension headaches (Zitman et al, 1992).

At this point Gilmore, (1987) and Hammond, (1990) claimed that using hypnosis is very subservient at treatment of sexual disorders like vaginismus (Kampman, Kauppila, 1978). Also therapists found that in comparison of other traditional sex therapies, hypnotherapy was more effective in such clients (Araoz, 1982; Araoz, 1984; Galden et al, 1987).

Generally, hypnotherapy is a situation of focused arousal in which perceptual monitoring and consciousness are dissociated so, imagination and fantasies are commonly applied by hypnotherapist (De Pascalis, 1998). It has been expressed that Hypnosis is a deep relaxation technique that reduce stress and the intensity of emotional and psychological concentration on conception (James, 2009) and induce trance to alleviate suffering or to promote healing (Shenefelt, 2002). Although, applying hypnotherapy for improving numerous disorders are profitable, it has great debate about its iatrogenic risk, that is the questions of efficiency, reliability and faith of hypnotherapy are still existing (Schneider-Braus, 1986; Stoil, 1989).

According to this view this article focuses on this question whether hypnotherapy can treat the patients who complains from vaginismus?

2. Background information

Client was 35-year-old woman who married 11 years ago, and had a son. She described her problem as vaginal spasm pain even before penetration. She referred to many gynecologists frequently whom advised her surgery of vagina. During the past 11 years of marriage, woman and her husband, submerged this problem from anybody especially their family. It becomes clear that the man had very cold manner with his wife and they had less interpersonal speech with each other toward first session. Assessing the background of patient illustrated that at the first day of marriage they had't any trouble in their sexual interaction but at the second day of their marriage they went to the travel with the man's family so they could't had any sexual behaviour during 15 passed days. Woman claimed that position was very harmful for her. According to interview, vaginismus has been diagnosed for her problem. At the first step, therapist referred woman to one of the most famous gynecologists at Day hospital. Culminate examination, has been illustrated that there was no physical problem for complete sex in woman. After physical checkup, client has completed DASS21 (Lovibond, Lovibond, 1995) test. This test was performed, because the therapist wants to investigate psychological situation of the patient too. The result showed that she had't any pathological anxiety, depression and stress. In conclusion, therapist assumed that feeling intense pain with crying along intercourse was because of mental avoidance. It seems that client applied mental avoidance as defense mechanism so the therapist focused on positive-trance to solve the problem.

3. Method

3.1. Therapy

First step of treating was training relaxation. This technique was used to reduce anxiety for slacking the vaginal muscles. She practiced this technique during a week. Hypnosis, positive-trance and imagination have been performed for the next session. Based on this position patient relaxed herself and used positive-trance to confront mental avoidance. According to therapist's declaration, She imagine herself at wonderful garden with her husband and experienced full sex with him. Although, during this process she had no pain, emotional excitement and rapid heart rate have been reported by her. Even, She experienced orgasm toward hypnotherapy. This experience as cognitive process has been used when the patient was conscious. Ultimately, the patient was satisfied and claimed that she could have sex with her husband. After a week she announced that she had completed sex relationship without pain with her husband. After 3 months follow-up was determined by the therapist showed that in all her sexual activity she was satisfied and experienced painless sexual relationship, and even she experienced orgasm.

4. Conclusion

Achieving success in treating vaginismus with hypnotherapy at this case has been illustrated that hypnotherapy can be applied as operational remedy method. Thereupon, when the source of vaginal spasm is psychological, the function of hypnotherapy is thoughtful. When the client experience trance, one positive imagination on her has been created by hypnotherapist and mental avoidance which is Rised up as vaginal spasm has been disappear by imagination. This process has been studied by principles of Quantum Physics. When the hypnotherapy occurred, imagination transforms to material and energy. According to this pattern, Material include vaginal muscles expansion and energy is positive psychological energy to sex and experience of positive excitement to sex. At this process client can experience pleasure sex without pain and vaginismus has been wasted. Follow-up assessment has been demonstrated that applying this method was reliable.

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