Correlation of the Disease Symptoms of Obsessive Compulsive Disordered Patients with Their Religious Attitude and Behaviours

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Introduction

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) is a well-studied anxiety problem that receives significant attention in the literature because it significantly reduces patients' quality of life (Macya, et al., 2013; Koran, Thienemann & Davenport, 1996; Hollander, Kwon, Stein, Broatch, Rowland & Himelein, 1996). OCD may exist in different forms among patients based on the interaction between several individual, social, psychological, religious, and environmental factors (Cansaydar & Cosar, 2001). Several studies conducted on OCD patients from different cultural backgrounds illustrate how culture may affect OCD symptoms (Tek & Ulug, 2001; Rassin & Koster, 2003; Abramowitz, Deacon, Woods & Tolin, 2004). In addition, several studies conducted on Muslim communities in Bahrain, Egypt, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia report (based on their observations) that cultural and religious factors may affect the type and severity of OCD symptoms that appeared in these communities (Okasha, 2004; Shooka, Al-Haddad & Raess, 1998; Tek & Ulug, 2001).

Furthermore, the studies conducted on Catholics, Protestants, and Jews report statistically significant results indicating that some OCD cognitions may have religious roots (Abramowitz, Huppert, Cohen, Tolin & Cahill, 2002; Sica, Novara & Sanavio, 2002; Rassin, & Koster, 2003). For example, Abramowitz, Huppert, Cohen, Tolin & Cahill (2002) administered a scale measuring religious OCD symptoms (related to fear of committing sin and punishment from God) to a sample of college students. Their analysis indicated that 1) highly devout participants are associated with significantly higher scale scores and 2) devout Catholics and Protestants are associated with more fear of sin and punishment than the devout Jews.

This study sought to analyze the relation between the severity of OCD symptoms and a set of religious, psychological, and demographical factors in a Turkish-Muslim sample that is clinically diagnosed with OCD using bivariate statistical analysis. The main question of this research is whether there exists a
relation between severity of OCD and being religious. For this purpose, the severity of OCD symptoms, level of religiosity, and level of depression among our patient sample were measured using several scales. Then, the correlations between (1) the demographic factors of the patients and the severity of OCD symptoms, (2) the level of depression and the severity of OCD symptoms, (3) the level of religiosity and the existence of religious OCD (definition of religious OCD will be discussed below), and 4) the severity of OCD symptoms and the existence of religious OCD in our patient sample were examined through bivariate analysis. The following six hypotheses were constructed for this purpose.

- **H1: Severity of OCD symptoms and gender.** Gender significantly affects the severity of the OCD symptoms. Women are associated with higher severity of OCD symptoms than males.
- **H2: Severity of OCD symptoms and level of depression.** Severity of OCD symptoms is positively associated with level of depression. Patients with a higher depression level are associated with higher severity of OCD symptoms.
- **H3: Subjective religiosity and rationality of belief/faith.** There is a positive relationship between subjective religiosity and religious rationality. The patients with higher level of subjective religiosity are associated with higher religious rationality. Note that subjective religiosity and religious rationality terms are discussed in more details in Religiosity Measures section.
- **H4: Severity of OCD symptoms and existence of religious OCD.** Severity of OCD symptoms is positively associated with existence of religious OCD. The patients with religious OCD are associated with higher OCD severity.
- **H5: Existence of OCD and subjective religiosity.** There is a positive relationship between the existence of religious OCD and subjective religiosity level. The patients with religious obsessions have higher levels of subjective religiosity.
- **H6: Existence of OCD and rationality of belief/faith.** There is a significant relation between the existence of religious OCD and rationality of religious beliefs. The patients with religious OCD are associated with lower rationality of religious beliefs because of the religion-related intrusive and inconsistent thoughts caused by the religious OCD.

**OCD and Associated Symptoms**

OCD is an anxiety disorder which is generally present in the form of two distinct and simultaneous symptoms: (1) Obsessions: The existence of repetitive