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Consideration of culture in interpersonal psychotherapy practice in Asia: a case study

Key words: Interpersonal psychotherapy; Cultural adaptation; Depression; Personalized approach

Background

- **IPT in Asia: IPT, a structured therapy for depression, is spreading rapidly in Asia due to its focus on interpersonal relationships. However, cultural differences pose a challenge to its further dissemination.**
- **Importance of Culture in Therapy: Cultural factors significantly influence psychotherapy.**



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- The case of this study contrasts two individuals in terms of the influence of attending or missing Chinese keening rituals on later depression among bereaved young adults, indicating the importance of taking culturally-specific factors into account in order to achieve psychotherapeutic benefits of IPT.

Case Presentation

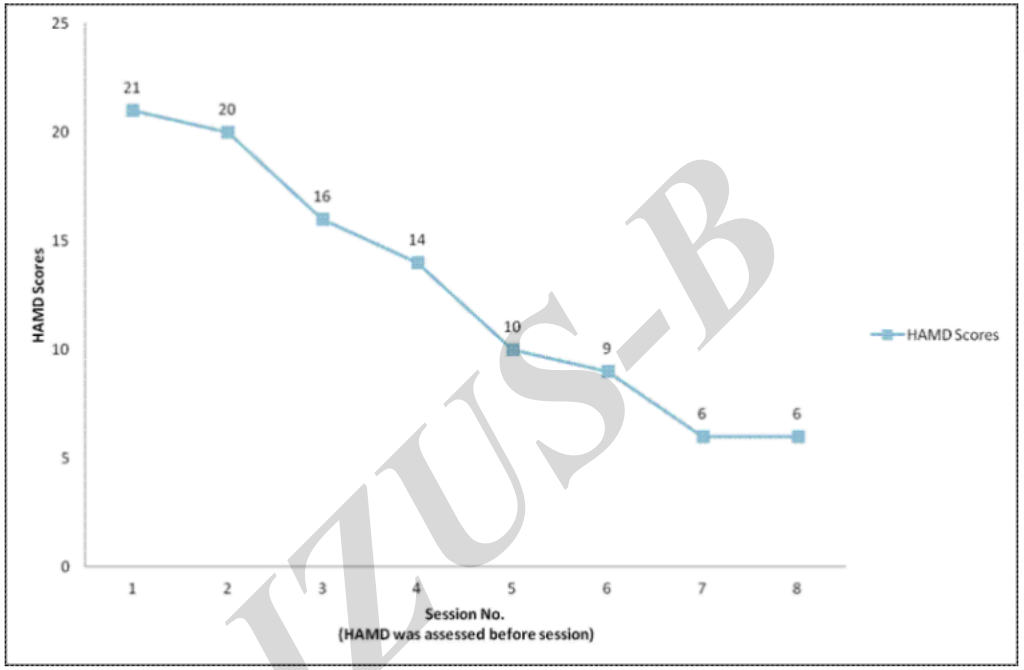
- **The Client: An 18-year-old student was diagnosed with major depressive disorder. Her mother's sudden death, lack of communication during her illness, and missing the keening ritual left her with suppressed emotions. The therapist used IPT with culturally - adapted exercises like Photo Album Review, Workplace Visit, Alternative Farewell Ritual, and Peer Support.**

- **The Client's Sister: The client's sister participated in the keening ritual. She experienced a period of low mood but did not develop major depression, showing the potential protective role of the keening ritual.**



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Assessment and Results



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Fig. 1 Change in HAMD scores during the psychotherapy as assessed before each session.

The client had high HAMD - 17 scores initially, which decreased significantly during IPT treatment. The sister had no significant depressive symptoms.

Conclusion

- The case shows that keening may reduce the risk of major depression in young adults after parental loss. It is a prime example of how culturally specific elements incorporated into IPT can enhance therapeutic outcomes while respecting cultural values.

- Cultural factors are vital in IPT practice in Asia.Adapting IPT to cultural context can improve treatment outcomes.

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