

## The Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on the Symptoms of Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) in Mothers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Ahmad Mansouri<sup>1\*</sup>, Naema Korozhde<sup>2</sup> and Samaneh Miri<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

The aim of present study was to investigate the effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on the symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) in mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder. In this quasi-experimental study, 16 individuals among mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder, who had a file in Sabzevar City well-being centre, were selected by available sampling method and then randomly assigned into two experimental and control groups. The experimental group participated in 8 sessions of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) based on Hayes et al. protocol, while the control group didn't receive any treatment. The participants completed Generalized Anxiety Disorder scale (short form), Penn-State Worry Questionnaire and Worry Domains Questionnaire. Data were analyzed by SPSS 24, using Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). The findings showed that acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) has reduced generalized anxiety and worry symptoms in the experimental group, in comparison to the control group at post-treatment ( $P < 0.05$ ). Result showed that acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) might be an efficient way to decrease generalized anxiety and worry in mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder, and therapists can use this therapeutic approach to decrease anxiety symptoms in mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder.

**Keywords:** *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), autism spectrum disorder*

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Neyshabur Branch, Islamic Azad University, Neyshabur, Iran (**Corresponding Author**) mansoury\_am@yahoo.com
2. M.A. Student in Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychology, Neyshabur Branch, Islamic Azad University, Neyshabur, Iran
3. M.A. Student in Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychology, Neyshabur Branch, Islamic Azad University, Neyshabur, Iran